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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2ND, 2012

LEFT: A group of Cowbridge pupils are pictured holding their own editorial conference at the offices of The GEM.

(TO FIND OUT WHY, SEE THE FULL STORY ON PAGE 3)

Town council opts for two per cent rise in the rates

REPORT by PHILIP IRWIN

COWBRIDGE with Llanblethian Town Council is likely to put up its portion of the council tax by two per cent this year.

This means that the bill will rise from £52.08 to £53.12, because the town council's portion of the total council tax bill is the smallest of three elements.

South Wales Police is currently looking at how much it will ask for, and the largest chunk of the council tax bill will come from the Vale Council – that budget is currently being prepared.

The chairman of the finance committee, Coun Jon Harris, said that the council had frozen the bill last year, and the rise for each of the previous two years had been two per cent.

To keep the rise to two per cent, two committees, for leisure and amenities and for the town hall, were having their budget cut by £1,000 each.

He told the council that this had been an unusual year because, for the first time in his recollection, the revenue from the area was due to fall.

He explained: "Each year, the Vale Council gives us a figure telling us how much £1 of council tax will raise for the town council.

"This year it has fallen – leading to a £1,000 shortfall."

The Vale Council's calculations indicate that £1 of council tax will raise £2,400, a smaller figure than in previous years and a real puzzle, considering that a number of homes in the area have been built during the year, and this normally increases the figure slightly.

Speaking after the meeting, Coun Harris told The GEM: "I have racked my brains this trying to figure this out, and the only explanation I can come up with is that there are more homes in Cowbridge now in single occupancy, which entitles that single occupant to a 25 per cent discount on the rates."

However, there was opposition to the proposed rise from Coun Marian Arnold and deputy mayor Coun Nicola Thomas. They both felt that, in view of the present economic situation, the council should opt for another freeze of the rates.

Coun Arnold felt that all departments of the council should be seen to be cutting back.

Coun Nicola Thomas noted that the town hall committee planned to re-carpet the town council chamber in the next financial year – at a cost of £2,500.

She said that she did not think that the chamber needed to be re-carpeted.

Summing up, Coun Jon Harris said that the finance committee had produced an "almost balanced budget".

He said: "It is an equitable way of safeguarding council services without jeopardising council finances."

The revenues and benefits manager at the Vale Council, Nigel Smith said: "The council tax base is a snapshot at October 31 each year.

"In October 2012, there were 1,985 properties in Cowbridge, compared to 1,983 the previous year – a growth of only two properties.

"In the corresponding period there was an increase in empty properties and more single person discounts applied, both of which decrease the council tax base."

Ambulance response times for Cowbridge 'well short of target'

FIGURES presented at a recent council meeting show that ambulance response times in the Cowbridge area are falling well short of targets set by the Welsh Government.

When it comes to 'red alert' call-outs – where the target is to get there within eight minutes – only 38 per cent of responses in the CF71 area were getting there in time.

The CF71 area starts at Welsh St Donats, and includes Cowbridge, Ewenny, Llandow and St Bride's Major.

The meeting was told that the main problem was that ambulances were frequently stuck at hospital A & E departments because beds were not available.

For patients in the Vale, there were delays at the University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff, and at the Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend.

The statistics were revealed by Richard Lee, the regional director of the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust, when he attended a meeting of Llantwit Major Town Council.

Mr Lee told councillors that his aim in making the presentation was to be "completely transparent" and to explain the problems that the ambulance service faced.

Figures quoted were for the period May 2011 to October 2011.

The Llantwit councillors were told that the response figures for the two postcodes in the Llantwit area, CF61 and CF62, were better.

The CF62 area, which includes St Athan, Rhoose and parts of Barry, had a response twice as good as Cowbridge, at 75.87 per cent.

CF61, the rest of Llantwit Major, was almost exactly at the Welsh Government target percentage of 60, recording 60.4 per cent – a figure that Llantwit councillors at the meeting were not too impressed by.

Mr Lee emphasised that the service was not "working to target" and was constantly aiming to exceed the official rate.

See next week's GEM for more on this story.

PHILIP IRWIN

Suspected 'bag snatch'

THERE was considerable police activity in Cowbridge town centre at around 3pm yesterday (February 1) following a reported 'bag snatch'.

It involved a number of police officers and patrol cars. A police spokeswoman said a "handbag theft" was under investigation, but no further details were available.

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Exploding myth of sea mines in dock

I WRITE in reference to a letter in The GEM on January 19, containing a mention of my name, by Mr Christopher Short, concerning sea mines landing in the Barry dock area (No 1 and 2 Docks).

May I allay Mr Short's fears of being blown to bits?

He stated the town should be evacuated because a German wartime mine landed in the No 2 Dock near Rank's flour mill and sank into deep mud.

One exploded near the north basin gates, and another landed and exploded on the walls of the graving dry docks between two ships, *SS Highwood* and *SS Jamaica Planter*.

Both ships were severely damaged, after taking the full impact of 1,259 lbs of high explosive. Sadly, the first mate on *SS Highwood* was killed on watch duty in July 1941.

Around 1999, a Barry Dock tug boat dropped its anchor in No 2 Dock for some reason. Before the crew of the tug boat decided to pull the anchor back in, they noticed a large cylindrical object around seven feet long and three feet wide.

One side of the anchor had dug itself deep into the steel casing of the acoustic sea mine and the tug's crew tried to prise it off the anchor.

All I can say is that they were very lucky to remain alive. Acoustic sea mines have five booby traps built into them to stop any enemy investigation. God was really with them that day!

Eventually, the crew realised what it was and the Royal Navy bomb disposal team was called from Plymouth.

The mine was taken out of the dock via the Windsor Locks area; demolishing charges were attached to the mine in deep water off Sully Island and it was blown up.

Mr Short can now sleep well in his bed, knowing everything is safe in Barry No 2 Dock – after over 50 years, the mine has gone!

The tug's crew were very brave indeed, and all sailors had a national medal award.

George Hortop,
Barry.

PRIVATE SECTOR CLINICS FLAW

IT appears that Andrew Lansley, the Secretary of State for Health, is proposing that private sector clinics be allowed to 'sub-contract' work from the NHS.

This may or may not be a good idea – but, according to the article, he is not going to insist on their having professional indemnity insurance.

Such a policy will leave those using the clinics at risk if they fail to carry out an operation properly, in exactly the same way that the recent problems over private-sector breast implants has left people suffering and unable to get compensation, or leaving the taxpayer to pay through the NHS.

There is an old infantry officers' joke about the cavalry officer who was so stupid, even the others noticed.

If it was only a matter of changing this to "*the politician who was so stupid* ..." it would not be a problem, but if implemented, this policy will leave everyone at risk.

I do think that everyone should apply whatever pressure they can on the Government to get this insane policy changed.

Gavin Davies
Penmark

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We will (in certain circumstances) protect a writer's identity, if requested. Please keep your letters BRIEF and address them to: The Editor, Glamorgan GEM Ltd, Graig House, 53 Eastgate, Cowbridge CF71 7EL.

'Councillors need time to digest Development Plan'
– SAYS PLAID GROUP LEADER

AS LEADER, I write on behalf of the Plaid Cymru group on the Vale Council to inform the public of the totally unacceptable manner in which the Local Development Deposit Plan (LDP) was examined at the extraordinary full council meeting on January 25.

The meeting was specifically arranged to consider the LDP and yet many councillors had not been provided with a copy in advance, and had not been able to read its contents.

Also, significant amendments to the deposit plan, involving housing allocations and settlement boundaries, were tabled at the meeting, with no opportunity to consider or discuss the implications.

The LDP process is one of the most important functions of local government as it provides the strategy for future land use and development, including settlement boundaries, new housing etc, from 2011 to 2026.

Openess, transparency and fairness have been identified by the council as key principles underlying member development. How can the Conservative-controlled council promote such principles and yet behave in this way?

Why the unseemly rush? All members should have been briefed thoroughly before making a decision.

As to the substance of the deposit plan, many questions can be raised. Of particular significance is the transport infrastructure involving connections between Barry, Dinas Powys, Penarth and Cardiff.

What is proposed is completely inadequate to deal with the traffic increase that will arise from the planned housing development.

Over 5,000 new dwellings will be created including Barry (3,052) ; Penarth (600); Sully (650) ; Dinas Powys (400) and Llandough (170). The traffic pressures on Dinas Powys and the Penarth road junctions at the Merry Harrier and Baron's Court will be intense and impact on a road system that is working at maximum capacity for an increasing period of the day as it is.

Congestion, pollution, quality of life and road safety will deteriorate even further.

The deposit plan states that "local highway and junction improvements" will be sufficient to deal with the extra traffic. We reject this claim.

Such an increase in traffic movements should not be sanctioned without a Dinas Powys by-pass and associated development at Merrie Harrier and Baron's Court.

Unlike the existing Unitary Development Plan, there is no reference to a by-pass in the deposit plan and this is unacceptable.

There are also other important issues which need to be addressed including variation in affordable housing ratios and the status of Green wedges. In view of its importance, more time is needed to digest and reflect on the content of the deposit plan.

Coun Margaret Randall,
Dinas Powys.

Plaid leaflets in Dinas Powys

I WOULD like to comment on a leaflet which has been distributed in Dinas Powys by Plaid Cymru.

It seems that Plaid (particularly Mr Chris Franks) think that they are responsible for all the work that the Community Council does in the village.

The widening of the pavement outside Dinas Powys Infants school was carried out by the Conservative-led Vale council.

The wonderful improvements to the parish and Lee halls were achieved by the whole Community Council and the previous clerk to the council – Mr Mike Goodfellow.

The summer play scheme was organised by all the community council, not just Plaid.

Feasibility studies for a cycle path have been going on for years and Coun Chris Williams knows there is NO money in the pot for this, or the new bridge at Cross Common road.

The land at St Cyres has to be sold to help fund the new school in Penarth, as all the Plaid councillors know.

When asked about all their statements in The Voice/Llais, at the community council monthly meeting, Vale councillors Chris Williams, Keith Hatton and Val Hartrey stated that they were not the editors of Voice/Llais and it was not their responsibility, but that of Chris Franks its editor.

It seems unfortunate that these three Vale councillors are not in control of their leaflets.

Remember, they are the elected councillors for the village of Dinas Powys and these three are salaried Vale councillors, who should make it their business to know what is printed about them.

Robert Foxwell
(*Community Councillor*)

Crime up or down?

LABOUR councillor Bob Curtis states that the current Conservative Government is risking our safety by cutting 16,000 vital police officers (yawn – he would say that wouldn't he?)

What would they do instead, given the economic situation everyone knows we are in?

I have no political favour, but when he goes on to blithely say that "crime fell 43 per cent under Labour," I think it would be normal good practice for him to detail/give reference to the statistics on which this statement is based.

I'm quite happy to be wrong on this as I will sleep happier in my bed if that is the way things are, but having just watched a particularly abhorrent episode of the BBC's Crimewatch, I have my doubts.

Jon Pearce,
Llancarfan

'SO MUCH FOR DEMOCRACY'

SO THERE WE ARE! Despite over 4,500 signatures of people opposed to the location of a Sainsbury's store in Park Crescent, Barry, as well as the opposition of planning committee members of the Vale Council to the proposal, the Planning Inspectorate has given the go-ahead for the scheme, without allowing anyone the opportunity to represent our views.

So much for democracy!

"*Local opposition is not of itself a sufficient reason to refuse planning permission*" – in other words, what local people want, is of no importance.

I'm sick of hearing stories of these giant supermarkets always having their own way against the wishes of the rest of us.

I, for one, will never set foot in that Sainsbury's store and will continue to use the existing shops in the Crescent.

I hope the other 4,449 or so people who signed the petition follow my example.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if people power managed to close it down?

Norman Pereira,
Barry.

Lord Haw-Haw's Barry connection

I READ with interest the recent GEM letter from Mr B Kirke of Barry, asking if I am correct in stating that Lord Haw-Haw (William Joyce) lived in Newlands Street, Barry – as his information is that he may have lived at 49 Bassett Street.

I am certain he lived in Newlands Street, and I do know the house number. He may well also have moved around and lived in Bassett Street, and he also frequented a house in Clive Road, Barry Island.

Why did he do this? Simple – he and others were under surveillance by both SB (Special Branch) and MI5 as possible – in the pre-war years – security risks. As a spy for the Abwehr, he moved around to different addresses.

Sir Oswald Mosley and Diana, his wife, as leading Fascist Blackshirts, were both jailed under Regulation 18(b) of the Defence of the Realm Regulations after war started, as security risks.

William Joyce was by then, in Germany.

Regarding Barry Town Hall clock, I did comment in my original article that a broadcast by William Joyce from wartime Berlin, mentioned that one clock face showed a different time (two minutes slower) from the other.

This was correct, a fact he had observed when a Barry resident.

He used this to indicate that his information on other subjects was correct – it wasn't.

Christopher Short,
Barry.

Personal reminder of Barry oil spill

I WAS very interested to read Mr Idris Michael's memories of the 1970 incident which caused an oil spill on Whitmore Bay.

My late father, Ken Miles, was Mayor of Barry Borough Council at that time, and thea photo (above) shows him inspecting the beach, following the averting of the disaster.

With him is the Secretary of State for Wales (and later Speaker of the House of Commons) George Thomas MP.

Sue Bowyer
Barry Island

HIGH TIDE TIMES
(UNTIL FEBRUARY 9)

The high tides listed in this week's GEM are those in Porthcawl. It should be remembered that along the coast, high tide times will vary. For instance, in Barry, the high point will be 20 – 25 minutes later.

DATE	Time AM	Ht M	Time PM	Ht M
02 Thur	00.45	7.3	13.33	7.2
03 Fri	02.18	7.5	15.07	7.5
04 Sat	03.41	7.8	16.11	8.0
05 Sun	04.34	8.2	17.01	8.4
06 Mon	05.12	8.8	17.42	9.1
07 Tues	05.53	9.3	18.22	9.4
08 Wed	06.36	9.9	19.01	9.8
09 Thur	07.17	10.1	19.39	10.0

While The GEM makes every effort to check the accuracy of tide tables, we recommend that anyone putting out to sea, or walking in an area where they could be cut off, should always check with a tide table specific to their location.

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Published by: Glamorgan GEM Ltd., 53 Eastgate, Cowbridge. CF71 7EL. Printed by NWN Ltd.
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School takes on a real classic musical

ABOVE:
Cate McHugh, who will play Mrs Lovett, with Gareth Otley (Toby).

ABOVE:
Matthew Whitely, who will be taking on the challlenging role of Sweeney Todd, rehearsing his shaving technique.

RIGHT:
Cate McHugh (on left, this time in costume) in rehearsal with two other cast members.

REPORT by PHILIP IRWIN

THERE are plenty of calls at the moment that pupils need to be stretched by their teachers – and the drama department at Cowbridge Comprehensive School is certainly doing that, by choosing to put on the Stephen Sondheim classic *Sweeney Todd*.

The show will run for five nights next week (February 7-11) and many of the talented cast who did so well last year with Oliver! are back again.

Matthew Whitely, who was a threatening villain last year as Bill Sykes, has a more complex role this year, playing Benjamin Barker, the family man thirsting for revenge who becomes Sweeney, the dreaded 'Demon Barber of Fleet Street''

Cate McHugh, who played Nancy last year, is back in Cockney territory again, and has to mix broad comedy with cold-blooded evil as Mrs Lovett, who disposed of his victims by making them into pies.

Other key roles will be played by Gareth Otley (Toby), Oliver Hitchens (Judge Turpin) and Tom Harmer (Beadle Bamford).

Sweeney Todd has enjoyed a surge of popularity since Tim Burton filmed it, starring Johnny Depp and Helena Bonham Carter, and Michael Ball is currently getting rave reviews for his performance in the title role, in a show that is soon to transfer to the West End.

In this writer's opinion, it has the best opening of any musical and, after watching last week's rehearsal, the young cast are well on their way to getting the maximum from those opening 10 minutes.

The production team of Amanda Campbell (head of drama); Adrian Colborne (head of music); Rhiannon Owen, and Angharad Addison have been working hard to coach their cast through a score that requires some serious choral singing.

Some schools opt for musicals that are a safe bet and an easy ride, so Cowbridge are to be congratulated on tackling something more difficult.

The show is a fascinating mix of drama and comedy, although the humour is on the dark side.

To illustrate this, what better way than to point out that show is being sponsored by a local company – and a highly-appropriate one at that – Peter's Savoury Pies!

ABOVE:
Another victim for the Demon Barber of Fleet Street.

BELOW:
Rehearsing the opening number.

Y Bont Faen pupils learn about journalism – at The GEM

PUPILS from Y Bont Faen Primary School visited The GEM last week on a mission to learn all about the world of newspapers.

The year-6 pupils have been studying all aspects of journalism and their teacher, Jackie Jones, arranged the visit to give them a better idea of a newspaper office environment. After the pupils had visited, GEM reporter Philip Irwin came to the school to be 'interviewed' by the pupils, who had around a dozen questions prepared – plus many interesting follow up questions.

The questions ranged from the easy (How many copies does The GEM print?) to the testing (What is the most difficult type of story to write?).

There were plenty of enquiring minds on show – not to mention a couple of budding sports and financial journalists too!

The pupils are planning to produce a school newspaper, and their visit to The GEM may well appear in that issue.

Old Hall Bridge Club results

THE results for January were as follows:

January 4: *First, Anne Hughes and John Edwards; second, Sara Bartlett and Ian Dunglinson.*

January 11: *BGB competition – First, Terry Reilly and John Raymond; second, Helen Barrie and Penny Jarvis.*

January 18: *Handicap competition – First, Sara Bartlett and Ian Dunglinson; second, Carol Baron and Chris James.*

January 25: *First, Vida Halford and Connie Clancy; second, Anne Hughes and John Edwards.*

If you are looking to play a friendly game of bridge, why not join us? Visitors are welcome at 7pm on Wednesday evenings. If you need a partner, contact Old Hall.

All standard of players are welcome; our club is quite small, but very friendly.

SB

WI's AGM reveals plans for busy year

THE annual meeting of Y Bont Faen WI took place on January 19 in the Lesser Hall, Cowbridge, when Jayne Powell, WI advisor, guided the officers through the agenda.

The financial report was passed and a budget agreed for 2012. Jayne praised the treasurer on her excellent report.

The secretary looked back over the last year, reminding members of new experiences and knowledge gained.

The president thanked all officers, committee and members for their help and support throughout the year.

One officer resigned and a member volunteered to join, the remaining officers were re-elected and Jacky Jones was re-elected as president for another year.

Social events already arranged include a tour of the Crown Court, Cardiff, and a trip to the New Theatre.

The craft group continue to meet on Monday mornings. Members signed up for the many federation events available and we are looking forward to joining our link institute, Ystradowen, for a meeting in February.

The next Bont Faen WI meeting will be held on Thursday, February 16, at 8pm, in the Lesser Hall, when Mr Phil Pinder will talk on the history and work of the RSPB.

A warm welcome awaits guests. **JJ**

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Senior Citizens £5
Children (under 6) £5

'Mindless vandals' damage a town flower display on the river bank

MINDLESS vandals jumped over a wall in Cowbridge, and tipped flower tubs into the River Thaw.

Retailers arriving in Penny Lane on the morning of January 23 realised the tubs were missing and then spotted them in the river.

Due to heavy rainfalls, the fast-flowing water soon took them further downstream – and one was spotted in the centre of the river at Poplar Park.

It is not the first time the area around Penny Lane has suffered from vandalism. In the past hanging baskets have been a target for anti-social behaviour

The tubs are a small portion of the work done by Cowbridge in Bloom which aims to keep the town as attractive as possible using flower displays.

A member of the committee of Cowbridge in Bloom insisted that the group would not be discouraged and it was a case of business as usual.

He said: "We're undaunted and will replace and carry on.

ABOVE: The flower tubs on the bank of the river – but some are missing, having been pushed into the water.

"Three of the four tubs have already been retrieved and the last one has been located. We hope to get it out when the water level is lower."

Coun Marian Arnold, who has worked as a volunteer for the group, said what had happened was "deplorable".

She said: "The people responsible are mindless and should be brought to book. It is disgusting that people can act in this way.

"People put in a lot of time and effort into Cowbridge in Bloom. It is really hard work."

She added that she was pleased that some of the tubs had already been retrieved. ***Tim Chapman***

ABOVE: An upturned tub in the middle of the river at Poplar Park.

Memorials are meant to be moving... *BUT NOT IN THIS WAY!*

LEFT: The war memorial appears to have rotated slightly, and is no longer parallel with its base. BELOW: the familiar landmark outside Cowbridge Town Hall.

MYSTERY surrounds how the war memorial outside Cowbridge Town Hall has managed to move from its original place on its concrete base.

The news was given to councillors by town clerk Andrew Davies last week at the monthly meeting of Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council.

Mr Davies said that a sharp-eyed resident had noticed the movement, and as a result a report had been commissioned from Mossford's, the monumental masons.

The war memorial appears to have rotated slightly. Its base no longer lines up in parallel with the edge of its concrete foundation.

There appears to be no evidence of any subsidence around the memorial.

Instead, it appears to have shifted by about one to one-and-a-half inches in an anti-clockwise direction.

Mr Davies told the councillors that the report had said that the memorial was not in danger of collapsing, and he added that Mossford's had no theory about how it had moved.

There was no sign that the memorial had suffered any impact that could explain the shift.

There was, he said, some frost damage on one corner, but that had been ruled out as a cause.

It was agreed that the town hall committee would consider the matter at its next meeting.

PHILIP IRWIN

TOWN COUNCIL NEWS by PHILIP IRWIN

Praise for new bridge

LEFT: The new bridge in Poplar Park was praised at the town council meeting.

THE new bridge in Poplar Park attracted favourable comment at last week's meeting of Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town council.

Marian Arnold, in her capacity as chairman of the leisure and amenities committee, said that it was a great relief to see it open, and that many residents, who had benn forced to make a sizeable detour while it was being built, would welcome its completion.

ABERTHIN SPEEDING

News revealed in December concerning the number of cars that are breaking the speed limit when they enter the village of Aberthin has led to a call for police action.

Coun Elizabeth George took the opportunity to raise the matter during police liaison with PCSO Hilary O'Callaghan.

Coun George said that she had been shocked to learn that 32 per cent of cars were speeding as they entered the village, and asked if the police could do regular speed checks in the area to tackle the problem.

PCSO O'Callaghan said that she would pass on the request.

CRIME IN COWBRIDGE

PCSO O'Callaghan reported that it had been a quiet month for crimes, although there had been one case of wounding and assault. Two males had been charged in connection with this

She said that there had been four cases of criminal damage, and three thefts.

There had also been three instances of anti-social behaviour reported. These were one of loud music, one Christmas tree taken from outside a local restaurant, and one drunk and disorderly

PARKING

The issue of parking in the town was also raised during police liaison. Coun John Wilks said that he was concerned that more drivers were parking illegally, and asked if the police could supply statistics for the last six months on how many parking tickets were issued.

He said: "Is there a deterrent any more, or are people starting to think that they could park where they like with impunity in Cowbridge?"

He added that the council needed the information so that councillors could consider what course of action to take.

PCSO O'Callaghan said that issuing parking tickets was not her main role, although she did patrol the area whenever possible. She added that she would report the council's concerns to her Inspector.

PANTO SUCCESS

Councillors were agreed that the experiment of staging a 'one-off' pantomime in the town hall in the run-up to Christmas had been a great success.

Coun Dave Morris, the chairman of the town hall committee, said that it had made a modest profit, but that the main thing was that it had packed out the hall for a quality community event.

Closure of office leads to £200 bill for council

ABOVE: One of the signs pointing to the tourist information centre – which is no longer there.

THE decision to close the council offices in Eastgate has landed the Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council with a £200 bill.

The Vale Council took the decision to close the offices, which included a tourist information service, some time ago.

The offices have now been refurbished and let to local businesses, but there are still three signposts in the town – all pointing visitors in the direction of Eastgate for tourist information.

Councillors at last week's meeting of Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council were surprised to find that the bill from the Vale Council to correct this would be £200.

Cowbridge and District Bridge

RESULTS of the Vale of Glamorgan Bridge Club night on January 25 (24 pairs) were as follows:

First, Mary Moore and Tony Disley, 63.64 per cent; second, Mike Best and Kevin Maddox, 61.19; third, Ray Smith and Gwynne Maddox,59.62; fourth, David Wright and John Raymond, 59.09; fifth, Barrie Waite and Graham Norris, 55.77; sixth, Marjorie Morris and Linda Pinnock, 54.90.

Cowbridge and District Bridge Club, January 24, club night (20 pairs) –

First, Pat and Brian Swain, 63.89 per cent; first, Pam Higgs and Brenda Grove, 63.89; third, Gordon Berrey and Hugh Williams, 61.46; fourth, Teri Pollard and David Wright, 60.07; fifth, Helen and Mike Ruttley, 58.68; sixth, Dot Isaac and Diana Lewis 58.33. The new Friday afternoon club commenced last Friday at Llanbleddian church hall and will meet again on February 10 and 24 at 2pm.

New members are welcome to join us for a social game of bridge with light refreshments.

BRIAN SWAIN

Artist's exhibition

LOCAL artist Vera James opens her first solo art exhibition at Cowbridge Library on Wednesday, February 1.

She has lived in the Vale of Glamorgan for over 20 years and her exhibition explores the changing landscapes and seascapes of Wales.

The exhibition will run until February 29 on Monday-Saturdays.

FREE LOVE SPOON LESSONS

FOLLOWING on from your photographs in The GEM on January 26, I have been approached by somebody wanting to learn how to carve Welsh love spoons.

If other GEM readers are interested, I'd be delighted to run a couple of workshops in Noah's Place, Westgate, opposite the police station, Cowbridge, at no charge.

Leave contact details in the community coffee shop, open 10.30-12pm (Mon, Wed, Thurs and Sat) 11am-2pm on Tuesday, and I'll see what we can arrange.

Alun Armstrong , Cowbridge

CHOIR IN FINE VOICE FOR MAYOR'S CHARITY NIGHT

Cowbridge Male Voice Choir with musical director Shelley Thomas-Brown.

by PHILIP IRWIN

THE Cowbridge Male Voice Choir were the stars of an excellent concert last Saturday (January 28) – a charity event that also featured three local young soloists.

The concert, in aid of The Wales Air Ambulance and Marie Curie Cancer Care, the charities being supported this year by the Mayor of Cowbridge with Llanblethian, Coun Andy Banks, was well supported and came close to filling the new theatre at Cowbridge Comprehensive School.

The event was also supported by the Mayor of the Vale, Coun John Clifford, the Lord Lieutenant of south Glamorgan, Dr Peter Beck, Vale AM Jane Hutt and a host of mayors from towns in the Vale.

The choir, under the musical direction of Shelley Thomas-Brown, and accompanied on piano by Sandra Williams, sang five pieces in the first half, and another seven in the second.

Highlights included old favourites such as 'Cwm Rhondda', 'I Bob un Sy'n Fyddion', and 'American Trilogy' while the Russian piece 'Cavalry of the Steppes' was very impressive.

They finished with an emotional rendition of 'Morte Criste', and were greeted with a prolonged ovation.

There was plenty of applause too for the three soloists, all winners in last year's 'Music in the Vale' competition.

There were two examples of the wealth of talent being nurtured by the Royal College of Music and Drama in Cardiff in Grace Wain, a vibrant mezzosoprano with an impressive range, and Joe Atkin-Reeves, who plays the clarinet and alto-saxophone in both classical and jazz styles.

Grace sang two songs, 'Chanson Triste' by Henri Duparc and 'Ching-a-ring Chaw' - a real tongue-twister by Aaron Copland.

Joe performed one long piece in three movements, the jazz-influenced 'Fuzzy Bird Sonata' by the composer Yoshimatsu.

Grace and Joe were accompanied by Susan Bird, a concert pianist who now lives in the Vale, and she also accompanied the third soloist, her daughter, cellist Hannah Clist, who is in her final year at Cowbridge Comprehensive.

Hannah performed 'Chant du Minestri' by Glasunov, and 'Requibros' by Cassado. She started learning the cello at the age of five, and has already put together an impressive musical CV.

This year, she is fundraising after being invited to take master-classes at El Escorial (Madrid) in the Royal Palace.

In fact, she will be back on stage next week (February 7-11), as a member of the school orchestra for the drama department's production of the ground-breaking musical *Sweeney Todd*.

ABOVE: Vale AM Jane Hutt flanked by Coun Andy Banks and his wife Gill (left), and Vale Mayor Coun John Clifford and his wife Christine (right).

ABOVE: Mayors from neighbouring Vale towns supported the charity event. Pictured are (left to right): Dinas Powys Mayor Coun Chris Williams and wife Jacqui, Llantwit Major Mayor Coun Eddie Williams and wife Karen, and Barry Mayor Coun Bronwen Brooks and husband Wayne.

Photo contest

VALE Photographic Club will host a major event at Ystradowen Village Hall, on Friday (February 3) at 7pm.

The Severn Way Battle photo competition will be judged by Paul Richards and clubs taking part are Gwynfa CC, Pyle and Porthcawl PS, Barry CC, Bridgend & District CC, Inn Focus Group and Rhondda CC.

A buffet will be provided by members for all teams and friends.

MHW

The soloists (left to right): Grace Wain, Joe Atkin-Reeves, Hannah Clist, with accompanist Susan Bird.

DR WHO'S VISIT TO OZ – via LLANGAN!

AFTER an absence of several years since the first village panto, the Llangan and St Mary Hill Village Hall decided to embark on a new adventure and take Doctor Who somewhere (s)he'd never been: Oztralia!

The *Doctor Who and the Wizard of Oz* production, written by the village hall committee members, included the Doctor and her trusted companion, K9, on a quest to find the famous wizard... Down-Under.

On her way, she met and befriended Scaredcrow, Bin Man and Chief Brian the Lion. With the help of the Good Witch o't' North, they defeated the Wicked Witch of the East, while overcoming their respective hang-ups and learning one valuable lesson in life – we all need a 'little help from our friends'.

The hall committee is very proud of all the children who took part in the panto in their roles of Munchkins, lion cubs and mini-witches.

Both matinee and evening performances were very well attended and many in the audience said they were looking forward to the next production. Watch this space, Robin!

KL

Haggis and hearts

STAFF and customers of the Old White Hart in Llantwit Major enjoyed an evening of food, music and company on January 25 to celebrate Burns Night and St Dwynwen's Day.

The event was organised by landlord Graham Morgan and raised £154 for the National Eisteddfod in Llandow in August. With a target of £42,500 to aim at, the local fundraising group would like to thank all of those involved.

The Old White Hart celebrating Burns Night.

Quiz time at club

AT THE first meeting of the new year, if members of the Cowbridge Friendship Club thought they were in for a relaxing afternoon catching up on all the news, they were very much mistaken.

It was time to put on their thinking caps and in the words of the Agatha Christie detective Hercule Poirot, to use those *'little grey cells'* in trying to solve one of two quizzes.

The first was entitled 'Do You Remember?' where all the answers were in old money. Some were easy, others not so.

The second quiz involved answers with the word gold or golden, and everyone got off to a flying start but were stumped by the name of Istanbul's harbour.

Meetings are held on the last Thursday of the month. Telephone 01656 668446 to find out more.

PS

COMMUNITY NEWS

LLANBETHERY & LLANCARFAN

Your community correspondents are Sam & Patsie Smith on (01446) 751448

Quiz winners

AUDREY PORTER has announced the results of the Llancarfan & District Community Christmas quiz for 2011 and thanks to everyone who entered the quiz, which realised a total of £268 towards the Community Hall Funds.

Joint winners were:- Neil Mace from Canton, Cardiff and Richie Smith from Gwain Miskin.

Lent lunches

IT'S A bit early, but as Lent starts on February 22 those who attend our previous Lent lunches would be interested in knowing that there will again be three lunches, this time on a Thursday.

The first lunch will be provided by the ladies of Penmark, at the Penmark Village Hall on March 15 and on March 22 by the ladies of Llantrithyd in the Llancarfan Village Hall.

The final lunch will be prepared by the ladies of Llancarfan on March 29, also at Llancarfan Village Hall.

Lunches will all run between 12 noon and 2pm.

The price of the tickets will be advised in due course.

COMMUNITY NEWS

TREOES, LLANGAN & ST MARY HILL

Your local correspondent is Nancy Davidge, "Tynewydd", Llangan. (01656) 860303

Successful auction

THE auction which took place in the Treoes Community Hall on Saturday, January 28, was an outstanding success.

Visitors from Llangan, Coychurch and further afield, joined Treoes residents in bidding for some very interesting objects.

Proceeds from the sale will benefit Saron Chapel and the various hall activities.

A big thank you to the hall committee for collecting the larger items and for making it an enjoyable occasion.

Coming events

Dates for the new vestry at St Canna's, Llangan:

February 15 at 7.30pm, illustrated talk on Dylan Thomas by Alan Jones; entry £1.

March 22 at 7.30pm, 'Life in the Media' by Lucy and Rhodri Owen; entry £1.

April 1; wine tasting club; tickets £5. Contact Dave Reed on 01656 861362.

Llangan meeting

ST CANNA'S Church, Llangan, was the venue for an important meeting on Sunday, January 29 to discuss plans to accommodate six permanent traveller families and 15 transient families on the site now occupied by one family.

It was pointed out that the site is unsustainable, due to the lack of local facilities – e.g. schools, shops, surgeries.

The allocation does not take into account the conservation status of Llangan.

'Modern day genocides show human race has not learnt from the past '

'Blue Line' exhibition remembers Holocaust

MEMBERS of the Vale Council cabinet and other dignitaries assembled at Barry's Art Central gallery for a preview of this year's Holocaust Memorial exhibition, 'Blue Line'.

The month-long show, which opened to the public on January 25, features work from conflict and war artists Nicola Tucker and Maciej Hoffman, *a spokeswoman reports.*

Cardiff-based Tucker and Hoffman, from Wraclow, Poland, each brought their own interpretation of the theme, in their first full exhibition together in Wales.

Mayor of the Vale, Coun John Clifford, was among 50 people at the gallery in King Square, along with the Lord Lieutenant of South Glamorgan, Dr Peter Beck, the High Sheriff of South Glamorgan, Roger Thomas, Leader of the Vale Council, Coun Gordon Kemp and cabinet member Coun Anthony Ernest.

Coun Kemp, said: "This was a very thought-provoking exhibition and exemplifies why it is important to remember the events of the Holocaust."

He spoke about atrocities and genocides that have taken place over hundreds of years and are still taking place today, highlighting the fact that the human race still hasn't learnt from past mistakes and showing the importance of this exhibition.

Artist Nicola Tucker's sculptural installations include 'Thread of Hope' with its fibre optic, luminous light shaft and arrow work suspended, capturing time and space and the striking 'Red Cross' – created specifically for the Barry exhibition.

Maciej Hoffman and Nicola Tucker with the barbed wire chair.

She spoke to the assembled guests about the works on display and thanked the council on behalf of Maciej Hoffman and herself for being able to show their work in the gallery.

Arts development officer, Tracey Harding, said: "Maciej Hoffman's work, 'Reverse Perspective' and Wire Chair caused a flurry of interest.

"The visitors wanted to know why the barbed wire chair was there."

Translating through his wife, Sylwia, Hoffman said: "The chair represents an uncomfortable seat, to encourage you to have empathy for the people who died in the Holocaust, who are portrayed in the painting. You see their faces looking out from behind a barbed wire fence."

The exhibition can be seen at Art Central gallery, King Square, Barry until Saturday February 25, Tuesdays to Saturdays, between 10am and 4pm.

Councillors claim vital Vale planning document was 'rushed through'

REPORT by TIM CHAPMAN

OPPOSITION councillors on the Vale Council say they had insufficient time to study the Local Development Plan's 'deposit plan' before the ruling party put it through for consultation.

At a fractious meeting of the Vale Council on January 25, some councillors claimed they hadn't had a proper chance to look at the details of the 234 page document before the debate.

The deposit plan could form the basis of what happens to Vale planning over a 15-year period.

Labour councillor Neil Moore moved for a deferment, to give members more time to digest the full details of the plan.

Coun Moore said: "All the opposition councillors voted for the deferment, all the Conservatives voted to move the document forward."

He said opposition members had been left "annoyed, frustrated and gobsmacked" at the arrogance of the ruling party: "They were just not prepared to listen."

He insisted that although members who had requested hard copies got one, it was not good enough for the council to claim it was saving paper by not sending them out to everyone.

He believed it was so important to the Vale's future that all councillors should have been sent a copy.

Coun Moore stressed that he had huge reservations about the document, such as why some candidate sites had been chosen and others hadn't; and why some areas, such as Weycock Cross and Culverhouse Cross had gone outside the Unitary Development Plan boundaries.

"They've driven a coach and horses through the UDP, without giving proper justification for what they're doing.

"There was no briefing on it, as there has been in the past, and no opportunity to amend the document."

Coun Moore added that maps weren't even attached to documents, and his fear was that the principles had now been set for the future.

Coun Gwyn John of Llantwit Major First Independents told The GEM that the cabinet member for planning and transportation, Coun Jeff James had voiced strong support for the document: "Coun James said it was a good plan and that he was delighted with it.

"The problem was that many councillors hadn't had the opportunity to see it.

"One hard copy was left in the members' room and it was put on the website on the cabinet section, rather than planning."

Coun John said the importance of the document is such that all the councillors should have been given a hard copy well before the meeting.

"I like to read through a document and be able to highlight points or problems to be raised," he explained.

'BRIEFING'

Coun Margaret Randall, of Plaid Cymru, said she believed that Coun James had shown a "cavalier attitude" to members other than those in the Vale cabinet and that it was being rushed through.

She said: "In Coun James's words, it is one of the most important documents that the council has to deal with.

"The council sends out other documents in a hard copy form, so why couldn't they have done it in this case?

"At the council meeting, I asked for a briefing for members, but was turned down."

A council officer did offer a briefing but that was after the vote had been taken.

Coun Randall said she was concerned that with 4,800 houses designated for Dinas Powys, Barry, Sully, Penarth, and Llandough, the road network would not be able to accommodate all the extra vehicles.

"The infrastructure will not cope – the Merrie Harrier junction and the Baron's Court are operating at their limit."

She said these sorts of matters should have been discussed properly by members before the document went out to consultation.

'EXHIBTIONS'

But the Vale Council insisted that an electronic version of the plan and maps had been available online since before Christmas – on December 23, a full month before the council meeting.

Coun Jeff James explained: "On the night of the council meeting, to discuss and decide the LDP, there were members who said they did not have copies of the document, but many of these same members were quoting sections of it.

"It was available in complete detail – maps and background information – in the members' room and on the website.

"Indeed, where councillors had requested hard copies, they had been provided with them."

Coun James said that following the meeting, some members had made requests for copies and those had been sent out to them.

He said: "The council's own policy to save paper calls for reports and agendas to be sent out via email and be placed on the website.

"The council's decision to approve the LDP triggers a period of six weeks of consultation, including exhibitions, so the members and public will be able to engage in the whole process."

Coun James added: "I suspect that it is easier to say they do not have all the information rather than put the time into conducting an in-depth study and come up with proposals."

Vale residents will now be given an opportunity to make their views known, and following that, a report will be prepared for the Vale cabinet.

It then goes for consideration to the Planning Inspectorate.

VALEWAYS

FRIDAY, February 3 at 10.30am, 'Around the Dragon's Den' walk, starting at the Visitor Centre, Cosmeston Country Park.

Sunday, February 5 at 2.30pm, 'Hidden Vale – Wick Circular', starting at Wick village shop (SS 923723).

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Telephone: (01446) 738663 info@barrytowncouncil.gov.uk

Your constitution and latest audited accounts must accompany the application. New organisations must submit a business plan/budget in place of audited accounts. All applications complying with these criteria will be considered. The submission of an application does not guarantee that a grant will be awarded.

The Council is unable to consider applications from or on behalf of National Organisations, unless they can demonstrate that their services benefit a significant proportion of the local community.

Applications should be returned to the address given below by or before Thursday 1st March 2012.

Mr C Lewis
Town Clerk
Council Offices
7 Gladstone Road
Barry
CF62 8NA

Social services reform will underline commitment to the needy

HOW FUNDING CAN GIVE THE VULNERABLE A BETTER DEAL

THERE is a great opportunity for us to make a difference in the Welsh Government by developing policies, allocating funding and passing laws which can improve the lives of people and communities in Wales.

We can do a great deal more now than in the early days of the Assembly.

We have more powers, more confidence and greater experience about the improvements we can make to the social and economic fabric of Wales.

We also have partners in local government, the NHS, business and the voluntary sector who are working with us to help make a difference in these challenging times.

Last week, the Local Government and Communities Minister, Carl Sargeant AM, said: "For this Government, delivering reform is about: collaboration; simplification and accountability.

"Collaboration is necessary across all of our public services, between our councils, Local Health Boards, the police, fire and rescue services to deliver for the public."

We are now rolling out a series of consultation papers about new laws for Wales including the Social Services Bill to protect the vulnerable, safeguard children and set standards for the delivery of social care.

Gwenda Thomas AM, the Deputy Minister for Social Services launched this Bill in the Senedd, making it clear that we will be defining social services in a way that starts with a commitment to people in need and that will be active in identifying that need intervening at an early stage.

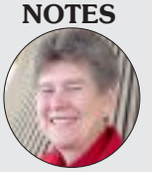
She said: "We are not prepared to sit by as fewer and fewer people receive the support they need.

"We will require local government to understand the dimensions and shape of the population in need in their areas, to make this public and to have the powers to make arrangements to provide a range of services to meet those needs."

In line with the message from Carl Sargeant, the Minister went on to say that the changes that would be made through this new Bill will require new ways of working, reducing regulation and bureaucracy so that social services can focus on addressing and responding to needs.

She reminded

ASSEMBLY NOTES



by Vale AM
JANE HUTT
(Minister for Finance and Leader of the House)

Assembly Members that the foundation for these changes has been the protection of social services budgets.

This goes back to the priorities we set in our budget following the UK Government cuts in 2010, to protect social services with an extra £10 million allocated to local government for social services across Wales.

There was widespread support for this statement from the Minister in the Chamber as she has worked hard to gain cross party support which has borne fruit.

Her announcement that the Bill will simplify arrangements in relation to adoption by placing a duty on all 22 local authorities to require them to come together to set up a single adoption agency was widely welcomed.

We are also considering the Housing and Regeneration Minister's policy paper on '*Meeting the Housing Challenge*' to prepare for the Housing Bill later in the spring.

This is vitally important as we face growing housing need in our families and communities.

As Finance Minister, I have been able to lever in further funding for the social housing grant which will help build new affordable homes in Wales.

In the late 1960s there was a BBC film called 'Cathy Come Home' about a homeless family walking the streets.

This led to the setting up of Shelter, the Campaign for the homeless which is working hard to support people in housing need across Wales.

Shelter inspired me to train as a social worker and led me into the voluntary sector and into politics.

Now I have the opportunity to help deliver on my lifelong goals and principles – to support and empower the vulnerable for a better deal in life – through the funding we allocate, the policies we adopt, and the laws we make here in Wales.

Vale AM's surgery

THE Vale AM, Jane Hutt, will be holding a surgery on Friday (February 3) at Trinity Church Hall, Barry, from 4pm to 6pm. No appointment is necessary.

Councillors' surgery

LABOUR councillors for Castleland ward, Barry, Chris Elmore, Pamela Drake and Karl Kuhnell will be holding an advice surgery on Saturday, February 4 between 10.30am and 12pm in the Castleland Community Centre, Belvedere Crescent, Barry.

Residents are asked to note the change of location for the surgery. No appointment necessary. Contact Chris Elmore on 07867 506 116, or 01446 402 220.

Rummage sale

THERE will be a rummage sale in the Lesser Hall, All Saints Church, Victoria Square, Penarth on Saturday, February 4 from 10am until 11.30am. Entry 50p to include tea/coffee. All proceeds to charity.

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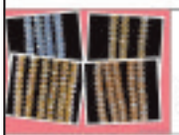

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VALE MP's VIEWPOINT

GAS DRILLING IS 'INAPPROPRIATE'

Vale MP Alun Cairns reports to GEM readers

I WAS disappointed to learn that Coastal Oil and Gas, the company behind a controversial gas drilling scheme in Llandow, is appealing the Vale Council's rejection of its plans to the Welsh Government.

Back in October 2010, councillors in the Vale of Glamorgan unanimously rejected an application to test drill for shale gas in the county.

The decision was a terrific result and a huge success for The Vale Says No campaigners, residents, businesses and local politicians, who all actively voiced their concerns and lodged their objections to the gas exploration planning application.

The appeal has been made to the Planning Inspectorate in respect of the site at Llandow.

Coastal Oil and Gas had the option of dealing with the appeal through written representations to the Planning Inspectorate, but has chosen instead to opt for a public inquiry. No date has been set as yet for the inquiry.

In the meantime, to make sure our concerns are heard, it's essential for local residents and businesses to submit their representations and opinions with Welsh Government's Planning Inspectorate (*www.planningportal.gov.uk)* as soon as possible.

All comments must be lodged by the February 14, or risk not being seen and considered by the inspector.

In its crudest terms, the original planning application could have been described as a bid to merely dig a hole on the business estate in Llandow.

However, this was simply not the case. I believe that the location is wholly inappropriate, based on the plans and aspirations of the community for the area.

I find it difficult to believe that anyone would consider such an activity in such a sensitive area. It is close to the Heritage Coast and abuts areas of Grade 1 agricultural land, very little of which exists across Wales.

Planning is a devolved matter and approval or rejection of any gas exploratory planning applications within Wales is defined as a responsibility for Welsh Government and the guidance they provide to local authorities.

The Vale is, so far, the only place in the UK where applications to test drill have been refused.

I do not believe that the exploration (and if found, the extraction of gas), will bring the promised jobs for local residents or maintain the wonderful heritage coastline and rural environment of the Vale.

To make a written representation, you can do so by following the link on www.aluncairns.co.uk, where I have also uploaded a generic letter opposing the appeal, or visit *www.planningportal.gov.uk.*

Written comments must be submitted by February 14.

I'd urge you all to make your personal representations if you have any concerns regarding the planning application.

I hope that local interests and concerns will outweigh national policy.

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- New service amendments such as additional materials we can recycle (recently clean foil, emptied aerosols and cartons such as tetra pak)
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FREE text alerts

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NEWS FROM THE BARRY MEN'S FORUM

Speaker describes helping the helpless children in India

OVER 25 years ago, our speaker, Mrs.Carol Evans, and her husband decided to take practical steps to tackle the great suffering caused by child poverty in south-east India.

They had found conditions to be appalling for young children, who with their parents were in a cycle of deprivation and poverty.

The causes of this were two-fold. Many had worked on the land but had been badly affected by a lack of rain and climate change.

In this area, they also found that 70 per cent of the population were cultural and religous outcasts who believed, with the majority of the rest of the population, that their huge sufferings were caused by their 'past-life' experiences.

Carol and her husband set to radically improve matters wherever they could. They discovered that the local children were largely employed in the match factories. In other areas, it was dangerous and badly-run firework factories.

It was common for the owners of these establishments to offer parents of young children money to enable them to purchase the basics of life, such as food.

Repayment would always be at extortionate rates that were impossible to pay back. Factory owners would then 'suggest' that payment could be made by letting their childeren come and work for a pittance. so that the debt could be worked off.

Carol also discovered that employers found it cheaper to employ little children than install machinery that could break down and involve installation costs. Children could always be replaced with others. Our speaker emphasised that all this took place against a constitution that made such practices illegal. This always seemed to be ignored.

Carol found that, despite India's increasing wealth, grinding poverty for the masses was the norm and corruption seemed to be endemic.

The shelter and support that the Evans' were able to provide for the children proved to be something of a miracle. Many youngsters condemned to be street urchins are now adult teachers, accountants and other professionals.

The home in Pooncholai houses 75 children, plus local adults devoted to their young charges. Members of the forum found this to be an inspiring talk that illustrated how determination and compassion had brought great changes in the lives of those who had previously had so little.

The forum meets today (February 2) at United Reformed Church, Barry at 10.30am. Alden Grindale will give a talk entitled 'Historical Walk – Barry'. For further information about the group, telephone 02920 594881.

MAC TANNER

The Bead Room at Boxes & Busts
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Workshops for intermediate and advanced students are available. Please see www.boxesandbusts.co.uk For more information

Beginners Metal Clay Workshop

The Bead room is open 9am() 4pm Monday to Saturday

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01446 781230
www.boxesandbusts.co.uk

Feb 2012 Beginners Workshop Schedule

Beginners Wire Work
Mon 6th Feb 6.30—9.30pm
Tues 7th Feb—10am—1pm

Beginners Chain Maille
Tues 7th Feb 6.30—9.30pm
Wed 8th Feb—10am—1pm

Beginners intro to Metal Clay
Tues 14th Feb 6.30—9.30pm
Wed 15th Feb—10am—1pm

The Basics of Jewellery Making
Thurs 16th 2.30—4.30pm
Thurs 16th 6.30—8.30pm

All workshops are inclusive of materials and use of tools. 10% off goods is also offered at the workshop for attendees

Conservatory? Extension? Or the Best of Both?

AN ORANGERY designed and built by Vale Orangeries is the answer to such a dilemma.

Vale Orangeries is run by husband and wife Dean and Leanne Edmonds. They specialise in building bespoke, luxurious Orangeries.

"We are both passionate about creating beautiful living spaces, and our range of orangeries are just that. Each build is completely bespoke, tailor made to our clients' specification. "explains Leanne

Vale Orangeries have completed numerous orangery builds throughout south Wales with many showhomes available for private viewings.

"We offer a free consultation and design service and have various orangery builds available to view at our clients' homes. This is a unique opportunity to talk to our customers about their experience and see for yourselves the quality of our work."

There are several design packages available, including bi-folding doors, recessed lighting options, underfloor heating, home entertainment solutions and an interior design service to help with those all important finishing touches.

Dean explains, "Having a living space built to your specification is a dream for many, and a reality for our clients. We ensure the whole experience is enjoyable and stress free. There is no need to concern yourself with architects, planning or building control as this is all part of the package. The only planning we want you to worry about is where to put your sofa! – but we can even help with that too!"

For updates on current and previous builds, visit www.valeorangeries.co.uk

If you are thinking of an extension or conservatory, but want something different call Dean or Leanne on 01446 746353 to discuss how a Vale Orangeries orangery can work for the way you live.

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VALE ORANGERIES

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Out and About with The GEM

CLOONEY ON FINE FORM IN TOUCHING COMEDY DRAMA

HAVING hit critical pay dirt with middle-aged buddy 'dramedy' Sideways in 2004, Alexander Payne could have easily taken the ball and run with it.

Instead, the writer/director took a sabbatical, and only now has he returned to the big screen directing George Clooney in a novel adaptation, *The Descendants*.

Clooney plays Matt King, a man who wants to sell a piece of land his family own in Hawaii.

However, when Matt's wife suffers a boating accident, he must look after his two daughters (Shailene Woodley and Amara Miller) and having played a small role in their lives, must reconnect with them and himself – all the while learning about what his wife has been doing behind his back.

For those who like their films with a degree of intelligence and humour, the absence of Alexander Payne from screens has no doubt been something of a disappointment – the writer/director managing to expertly mine the ennui of the middle-aged American man in the likes of *Sideways* and *About Schmidt*.

The Descendants then, on the surface, appears to be very much in the Payne milieu, and as you would expect, he delivers a mesmerising film that draws excellent performances from its cast.

He manages to deliver an emotional piece of work that doesn't push the schmaltzy buttons too much (a fault of much of the awards season fare thus far).

The subject matter could have seen Payne simply recycle the notes of his previous works given how they cleave so close to his output.

However, by adapting from the source novel, Payne, who co-wrote the script along with Nat Faxon and Jim Rash, takes his eye for these types of characters and introduces new elements that enrich the film.

While there are moments of comedy, the film is more dramatic than you would expect.

The story of a man wrestling with a life-changing decision, along with upheaval in his personal life, have moments of realistic comedy, but, tempered by the naturalistic nature of the story, there are no easy answers for any of the characters, no Hollywood-style ways out.

SCREEN TALK

by GARETH JAMIESON

Follow Screen Talk on Twitter - @GEMScreenTalk

Instead, the first person narrative plays it straight, and is all the better for it; Payne and co's screenplay balancing well.

His direction is superb as well, the beauty of Hawaii acting as a gorgeous backdrop to the familial strife that takes place, while Payne puts the concerns of the story first and foremost, the camera lingering on the characters and their responses rather than opting for fast cuts and clever editing.

Anchoring it all is an absolutely outstanding turn from George Clooney, who has rightly received acclaim for his performance.

While his best performances have often relied on his charm in tandem with strong acting (*Out Of Sight*, *Michael Clayton*) here Clooney reins in the charm – instead delivering a straight turn, with an element of comedy, that ticks all the boxes.

It is possibly the actor's most naked turn yet (not literally, I'm afraid, ladies) and watching Clooney on such fine form is truly a joy to watch.

Amidst the acclaim Clooney has received, the other performances in the film seem to have to gone unfairly unnoticed.

Woodley and Miller are both incredibly good as Clooney's two daughters, the former a troubled teen failing to connect to an absent father, while the latter manages to inject humour as an old-beyond-her-years youngster that provides much laughter.

Throw in Nick Krause as the default comedy character Sid, a role expertly delivered by the actor who manages to throw in some pathos to what is an otherwise played-for-laughs character.

Touching smaller roles for Beau Bridges, the underrated Judy Greer (showing her skills in an unfamiliar straight performance) and Robert Forster, leaves a cast who manage not to put a foot wrong throughout.

While the story hardly reinvents the wheel, it is delivered with such class and skill that you don't mind.

The return of Alexander Payne to the director's chair, and a wonderful performance by George Clooney are enough to sate the appetite, as *The Descendants* makes for a truly superb viewing experience.

VERDICT – The first of the 'awards season' films to really deliver, *The Descendants* is an excellent film that captivates and amuses with no small degree of intelligence. Alexander Payne's return is one of form, while the performance he coaxes out of George Clooney sees the actor stripped of his charm but resulting in the finest performance of his career; all in all a huge success! *Highly recommended*.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED: *Sideways* (2004), *About Schmidt* (2002).

Toy and train sale is a great day out

THE first toy and train collectors' show of the new year in Barry takes place on Sunday, February 5, at Barry Leisure Centre in Greenwood Street, from 10.30am to 3pm.

Top traders from all over Wales, as well as many from across the bridge, attend the Barry show and it has rapidly become established as a major event in south Wales.

It also complements the quarterly Cardiff toy and train sale held at Penarth Leisure Centre at Cogan, which is operated by the same organisers.

The venue is well-known as a clean, warm and well-lit centre, with plenty of parking available and easy access.

A local caterer also operates within the show throughout the day, and offers a wide range of refreshments at reasonable prices.

Organiser Chris Dyer said: "Barry has come around again and all the traders and the patrons are looking forward to another great day out."

DON'T MISS THE...
BARRY Nr. CARDIFF TOY & TRAIN SALE
SUNDAY, 5th FEBRUARY, 2012
10.30am - 3.00pm
Barry Leisure Centre, Greenwood Street, Barry, Nr Cardiff, South Wales CF63 4RU
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75 Tables, Many top dealers in Dinky Toys, Corgi Toys, Matchbox, Britains, EFE, Lledo, Hornby, Bachmann, Lima, etc. *and much, much more*
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E-Mail: dyer@minehead46.freeserve.co.uk
Website: chrisdyerfairs.co.uk

Blood donor sessions

THE Welsh Blood Service will be holding donor sessions in the area as follows:

February 7: *Bedwas Hall, Memorial Hall, Gladstone Road, Barry, 10am – 6pm.*

February 13-14: *Llantwit Major Youth Centre, Station Road, Llantwit Major, 10am – 6pm.*

February 17: *Mobile Donation Clinic, Tesco Stores, Castle Street, Maesteg, 10.45am – 1.45pm and 3.15pm – 6.30pm.*

Brackla Community Centre, The Triangle, Brackla, 10am – 6pm.

To view a comprehensive list of all blood donation sessions, please visit www.welshblood.org.uk or call 0800 252266.

Prizes to be won for school news projects!

PRODUCING a newspaper as a school project can be one of the best ways to develop a range of knowledge and skills in a fun way – and local secondary schools are among those being offered prizes and the opportunity for local and national recognition to do just that.

The Glamorgan GEM is offering to work with a local school entering the competition by featuring the project in our columns and arranging for students working on a newspaper project to see how their local newspaper is produced.

The Shine School Media Awards are designed to encourage teachers to build the production of a newsletter, newspaper or magazine into their programme, as an individual or team project; and the awards are open to all secondary-level schools in Wales and England.

Teachers may register interest on the www.shine-schoolawards.org website, where full details of the awards are available.

Entries must be submitted by the end of March 2012, to qualify for judging in the national competition.

Chairman of the awards, Ian Locks, said: "*The awards, now in their second year, are designed to encourage development of communication, writing and IT skills, provide experience of management and team work – and to encourage respect for copyright and a better understanding of the sustainability of paper products*."

Prize money of £4,500 is on offer to the main winners and all shortlisted schools will be invited to an awards ceremony at Stationers' Hall (next to St Paul's Cathedral in London) on Monday, June 25, to receive their awards or certificates.

WHAT'S ON

A NEW monthly 'pool circuits' fitness class is being launched at Barry Leisure Centre with a free taster session on Sunday, January 29, between 4pm and 5pm.

Coming of the Light

ART 4 U is holding its annual 'Coming of the Light Celebration – A Walking Contemplation' on Sunday, February 5, from 4pm at the Knap Lake and Gardens, Barry (meet under the Lake shelters).
Contact: art4uwales.org.uk.

Meet and greet

ST DONAT'S Arts Centre's newly-established theatre company welcomes anyone with a love of singing, dancing, acting – or backstage work – to meet and greet on February 6 at 7pm.
Contact Mike Peters on 01446 799100.

Mayor's coffee

VALEPLUS, the Vale-based charity that provides lifelong learning and leisure opportunities for people with a learning disability, is holding a coffee morning on Tuesday, February 7, between 10.30am and 12 noon.

It will be hosted by Coun John Clifford, Mayor of the Vale, in the Corporate Suite of the Civic Offices at Holton Road, Barry.

Tickets cost £1.50. There will be stalls including cakes, plants, books and NOVA, as well as a mystery prize game and a raffle. All are welcome.

Festival seeks feedback from local traders

COWBRIDGE Food and Drink Festival has already kicked of the organising of this year's festival and, as usual, are keen for feedback and suggestions from businesses in the town.

Together with the Vale Council, the committee has compiled a questionnaire specifically targeting local businesses, to collate their views of the weekend and (hopefully) respond, to make this an even more beneficial weekend for town traders.

The questionnaire has already been circulated to many local businesses, but copies can still be collected at the receptions of either The GEM or Cowbridge Town Hall.

John Davies, chair of the festival committee, explained: "It is important for us to work closely with the town's business people to make the entire Cowbridge experience positive.

"The festival was set up to showcase everything that the Cowbridge area offers throughout the year – and to encourage repeat visits.

"Therefore, we welcome the opportunity of working with local businesses to best highlight what they offer."

Chance for young dancers to mingle with Strictly stars

A LOCAL school of dance is celebrating, after being asked to provide young dancers for a touring show featuring professional dancers from *Strictly Come Dancing*.

Nerissa Usherwood, who runs the Vale School Of Dance, told The GEM: "We have been asked to perform with some of the BBC's *Strictly Come Dancing* professionals in an 'Evening with The Stars Of Strictly' at the Grand Pavilion, Porthcawl, on Wednesday, April 18.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for our pupils to perform on stage with professionals.

"Children from nine years and above will be dancing two routines in the show.

"Our rehearsals get under way this month, and we are offering some young dancers the chance to be included in the show.

"They will need to attend The Celtic Community Hall, Celtic Way, Rhoose on Saturday, February 4, 11.30am–12.30pm to audition."

Anyone interested can contact Nerissa on 01446 774449, valedanceandhealth@yourbiz.info, or via www.valeschoolofdanceandhealth.co.uk

The Vale School of Dance
Cowbridge, Rhoose & St Athan

AUDITION for STRICTLY
Dancers between 9 & 23 years
Audition to be held at
The Celtic Community Centre, Rhoose
Saturday, February 4th 11.30am
THIS IS TO PERFORM WITH THE PROFESSIONALS FROM BBC's STRICTLY COME DANCING
at The Grand Pavilion Porthcawl
Wednesday, April 18th
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GRANT CUT THREATENS BUS SERVICES IN THE RURAL VALE

REPORT by GEM STAFF

SUBSIDISED bus services in the Vale could be hit after the Welsh Government slashed grant aid – a Vale Council cabinet member has claimed.

The Vale Council's cabinet member for planning and transportation, Coun Jeffrey James, has written to the Welsh Government in the wake of a reduction of more than £123,000 in its Local Transport Services Grant (LTSG) – a drop of 27 per cent.

For the previous three years, the grant had been £445,000 (2009/10), £463,000 (2010/11) and £451,000 (2011/12), but it has now been reduced to £328,139.

The grant enables councils to pay for a range of transport initiatives, such as new community transport services, improving bus shelters and buying low-floor buses to improve accessibility.

In a letter to local government minister Carl Sergeant, Coun James said: "I have very serious concerns regarding our ability to continue to provide an appropriate level of local transport provision.

"We are currently concluding a bus service review for the council's area and this recent announcement means that it is inevitable that bus services will be reduced."

He pointed out that another grant, the Bus Service Operator's Grant (BSOG), had been cut by 25 per cent – five per cent more than in England, and said this would add to the problem.

Coun James said he feared bus providers would withdraw from tendering for routes, because their bids may now no longer be financially tenable.

He added: "The recent announcements will, without doubt, see a very visible and harmful reduction in the levels of local bus services."

Mr Michael R. Fox, the general manager of Cartel Travel which operates from Llandow in the Vale, and provides bus runs between Barry, Llantwit Major, Bridgend and Cardiff, echoed Coun James's fears and claimed it could put many local routes in danger.

'REMOTE COMMUNITIES'

He said: "The cut in the LTSG will mean a reduction in subsidised services, especially in rural areas.

"BSOG in England has had a reduction but this has been spread over 18 months, rather than in eight weeks.

"It takes 56 days to amend or cancel a service, which means operaters are having to make changes now.

"We have already cancelled a service and are looking at others to work out their sustainability given the current fares."

Mr Fox pointed out that in England an incentive scheme had been running for a number of years which rewarded operators undertaking certain measure, such as running low emission buses and introducing tracking systems.

He stressed: "This scheme has never been available in Wales and is worth a maximum of 13 per cent over the standard BSOG rate.

"With this, it is possible for an English operator to get £0.3906 based on the new standard rate of 34.57p per litre in England.

"We introduced tracking, radios, and Smart card readers years ago and would have been entitled to a 10 per cent increase in BSOG if we were in England.

"We have been left with the prospect of ending several marginal local routes which are relied upon by local residents in remote communities."

The Vale's MP, Alun Cairns, also expressed his fears that routes would be under threat.

"I can't understand why the Welsh Government are looking to introduce this substantial change to the Bus Service Operators Grant rebate at such short notice.

"I'm sure that many local bus operators will struggle to incorporate the reduction into their business plans and budgets from April this year."

He pointed out: "I'm concerned that this change in the BSOG could mean that we'll see an increase in fares but also a reduction in service levels.

"This would hit the Vale hard, as many routes through the rural areas were already under threat from cutbacks and lack of investment over the last 12 months."

Mr Cairns added: "I hope that the Welsh Government will look at this issue again. This action will also increase the pressure on local authorities, making it more expensive for authorities to support socially necessary bus services and school services, as operators will face higher costs when operating contracts."

Brynhill members vote in favour of housing scheme

BRYNHILL Golf Club members have voted in favour of proceeding with the proposed sale of part of their course for houses to be built there.

The vote took place at a private meeting last Thursday (January 26) which lasted two hours. Members questioned representatives of the housebuilder Redrow, and the golf course architects, Weller McEvoy, and highways consultants.

A vote was taken and a club member, who did not wish to be identified, told The GEM that on a show of hands, members were conclusively in favour, with the vote appearing to be around 65 per cent in favour, and 35 per cent against.

Before the meeting, Redrow representatives had indicated that, in the event of a yes vote, legal moves would then start to get the land included in the Vale Council's LDP as suitable for housing. The LDP has been issued in draft form (excluding Brynhill as a site for housing) and a period of consultation is about to start.

Redrow also said that more detailed plans would have to be prepared, dealing with issues such as drainage, ecology, soil and the exact number of houses that could be accommodated.

Last week, it was reported that, in the event of the house building going ahead, Brynhill would have a new clubhouse, a redesigned 18-hole course, and a surplus of £2 million.

The GEM understands that no decisions were taken on how the club would use that £2 million – although simply dividing it up between members seems to have been ruled out.

It was stressed, said the source, that the £2 million was not a guaranteed figure, because there were areas such as clubhouse design and the drainage of the course that still had to be costed in full.

PENARTH SPRING FAIR

THE Penarth fundraising group for Cancer Research UK will start their new fundraising year on February 4 with a spring fair.

It will be held in the Paget Rooms, Penarth, at 10.15am–12 noon. Admission is 50p, including a cup of tea/coffee and biscuits. There will be stalls of cakes/savouries, plants, preserves, white elephant, parcels/tombola and cards.

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SIX NATIONS RUGBY

2012 FIXTURES

ALL SET FOR THE BIG KICK-OFF! *SEE PREVIEW ON BACK PAGE*

Welsh rugby fans eagerly looking forward to the start of the Six Nations tournament this weekend, will have to wait until tomorrow for the starting line-up against Ireland in Dublin on Sunday.

Head coach Warren Gatland has delayed the announcement, in the hope that key injured trio Rhys Priestland, Jamie Roberts and Dan Lydiate, will be able to take the field for a crunch clash that both teams will be desperate to win – as they launch their bid for the 2012 title. (See back page)

PICTURES by HUW EVANS AGENCY

INJURY CONCERNS

RIGHT: Jamie Roberts (on left) and Rhys Priestland sit out squad training, but they are being given every opportunity by Warren Gatland to reach match fitness and line up against Ireland on Sunday.

ABOVE: Mike Phillips' control and power at scrum half could prove to be a vital factor in the game on Sunday.

ABOVE: In the blue bibs, Sam Warburton (left) and Toby Faletau will be key figures in the crucial breakdown battle against the street-wise Irish pack.

SIX NATIONS TIMETABLE

Saturday, February 4, 2012

France v Italy, 14:30
Scotland v England, 17:00

Sunday, February 5, 2012

Ireland v Wales, 15:00

Saturday, February 11, 2012

France v Ireland, 20:00
Italy v England, 16:00

Sunday, February 12, 2012

Wales v Scotland, 15:00

Saturday, February 25, 2012

England v Wales, 16:00
Ireland v Italy, 13:30

Sunday, February 26, 2012

Scotland v France, 15:00

Saturday, March 10, 2012

Ireland v Scotland, 17:00
Wales v Italy, 14:30

Sunday, March 11, 2012

France v England, 15:00

Saturday, March 17, 2012

England v Ireland, 17:00
Italy v Scotland, 12:30
Wales v France, 14:45

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Friday February 10th
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Saturday February 11th
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Friday February 17th
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Saturday 11th February
ALI DELGADO
Award Winning Latino Female Vocalist
Saturday 18th February
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MOVING OR

A TOUGH economic climate forces people to make some difficult lifestyle decisions – and no decision causes more tension than where to live.

For years, the dream has been to move onwards and upwards – upgrading your property until you eventually arrive at your dream home.

That dream home might come in many forms. It could be a cottage in the country, a solid four-bedroom detached in a nice part of town, a penthouse apartment, or a rambling old property that you will transform into an elegant town house!

However, when times are tough, those dreams sometimes have to be put on hold for a few years, and it is time to take stock instead.

However, rather than dwelling on the negatives, this temporary pause can be a great chance to look at your present living space and perhaps give it a fresh look.

After all, well thought-out home improvements will give a twofold benefit – the sense of wellbeing induced by having that work done, and the knowledge that, when you do decide to move on, your efforts will be reflected in the selling price of your home.

Experts have always argued that a good extension on a home will increase the value of it, and there are so many reasons nowadays for taking this step.

Families have to face the fact that it is not so easy for young people to get on the housing ladder, so children who in the past would have moved out as soon as they found their first job are now staying home longer while they save for a deposit.

A well-planned extension can give parents and children – well, young adults really – more space so that the family doesn't feel cramped and confined.

Necessary maintenance

It makes for a more relaxed living environment and, of course, there is the financial benefit to come, if and when the house is sold.

Of course, not every house or flat is suitable for an extension, but a great deal can be done in terms of redecoration and renovation.

It is a chance to do all that necessary maintenance, and at the same time indulge your creative side.

A new colour scheme, or new wallpaper and carpets can upgrade a room, making you feel good at the same time.

Perhaps when you moved in you felt that there were too many small rooms? This could be the chance to knock two into one and make a really expansive living space.

If your living room is looking good, perhaps it is the kitchen that is in need of a makeover?

Once again, living and cooking in a more modern kitchen can make life seem much easier, Again, it will pay off by increasing the value of your property – and make the cook in your family very happy!

No matter where you live, it is a rare homeowner who has no issues with his/her property.

There is always something that carries on niggling away because it just isn't right.

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IMPROVING ?

It might be the layout of the garden, the state of the bathroom, a lack of natural light in one room – it might even be something that no one else notices.

There won't be a better time to address these issues, and a successful solution to the problem can give a great deal of satisfaction.

Times are tough and money is tight – and sometimes you have to acknowledge that the grand design may have to be put on hold for a time.

However, that is no reason to sit back and do nothing. Whether you rely on an expert, or trust your own judgement, this could be the perfect time to improve your living space.

Life is full of stresses and strains, and home improvements can make a real difference to you and your family.

On these pages, The GEM has brought together a wide range of businesses – all local, and with the expertise to make your dreams a reality.

Standing still is rarely a good thing. You may be staying put for a few years, but that doesn't mean you can't move forward!

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GEM ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

In Business Update

Networking – Make it work for you today!

VWBN'S first speaker Marianne Pettifor, with 25 years' networking experience, will talk about how networking is changing.

She will address 'free of charge' and 'e' marketing as options for raising the profile of your business and gaining new business.

Come along and get some great tips from someone who has "been there" through thick and thin!

Marianne will also answer questions. So, put your thinking caps on and join us on Wednesday, February 15, at Bar 44, Cowbridge at 6.30pm; £10 non members, £5 members.

Please contact Rebecca to book; members@vwbn.org.uk

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Balmoral Motorhomes, based in Bridgend, mid-way between Cardiff and Swansea, offers a hire service for luxury motorhomes. Find us just off junction 35 of the M4.

A spokesman explained: "We only use new 2012 registered camper vans. We have four or six berth motorhomes now available for that special holiday.

"They are fully equipped and insured for drivers over 25 years old, complete with radio/CD, and flat screen TV/DVD player."

For our new 'hire' facility, or for new and used motorhomes or caravans for sale, call 01656 858289 – or visit us alongside Nathaiel Car Sales, Bridgend Industrial Estate, CF31 3SA.

Quality furniture venture a change of direction for couple

HUSBAND and wife team, Gareth and Nicky Punter, spotted a gap in the market for quality furniture in top-notch materials such as pine and oak, and, above all, a personal service.

Their new enterprise, Home Comforts Furniture Warehouse, opened on February 1 and is based in the Vale, equidistant from Cowbridge and Bridgend.

Gareth, who previously worked for a UK-wide furniture company as a sales and marketing manager, and who is also a joiner by trade, knows a thing or two about bespoke furniture.

"Not everyone wants the impersonal, flat-pack experience," he explained.

"Our aim is to provide a knowledgeable service for our customers. We'll go the extra mile and measure up for the customer at home to ensure the piece they want is suitable.

"In my experience, many stores sell low-calibre furniture at high prices. Ours is beautifully made, all the pine being made to order and finished by hand by British craftsmen.

"The oak is all solid and of the highest quality, fantastic to look at and keenly priced. We have divided the warehouse up into room sets so people can get a feel for how it will look in situ.

"We also have a range of beautiful accessories, so our customers can recreate the look at home, without needing to shop elsewhere."

The Parlane quality accessories are replenished on a regular basis and updated to run with current trends.

Gareth and Nicky, a former NHS training manager, have many years' experience in the furniture trade between them, and are keen to point out that their new enterprise plugs the gaps left by other businesses.

Richard, the store manager, is keen to get the business up and running and is enthusiastic about the future:

"The furniture is beautiful, well made and total quality," he said.

In addition to private homes, their furniture and accessories would suit boutique and country house hotels, high-quality holiday lets, and landlords wanting to let furnished properties in the executive market.

Home Comforts Furniture Warehouse, Unit 4b, West Winds Business Park, Llangan,Vale of Glamorgan CF35 5DR. Tel: 01656 861120; please visit our website: www.homecomfortsfw.co.uk

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Bridgend law firm achieves Lexcel Quality Standard

The Lexcel certificate is handed over by Wayne Williams of cpm21.

DP LAW LTD (David Prosser & Co), the well-known Bridgend law firm, were presented with the Law Society Lexcel Quality Standard recently.

To achieve the standard, a legal practice must undergo a rigorous check by an independent auditing organisation against the Lexcel Quality Standard.

"Achieving Lexcel accreditation reinforces our commitment to providing high-quality legal services tailored to client needs," said Diane Bishop, practice manager.

"We have held a Specialist Quality Mark for quite some time, which is the Legal Services Commission quality standard, but this only applied to our publicly-funded departments.

"Lexcel applies to all areas of the practice and demonstrates our continued focus – striving for excellent customer service at highly competitive fees," Simon Thomas, director, commented.

Massive clearance at Full Independence

FULL INDEPENDENCE currently has a massive stock clearance sale, with all in-stock scooters, stairlifts, Rise n Recline chairs and daily living aids all reduced by up to 70 per cent.

We are also offering further discounts on wheelchairs and walkers, so why pop into our spacious showroom, where you can try all our products with no obligation?

We are also taking bookings on all garden adaptions and if you book your garden adaption with us you can receive a £200 instore gift voucher (terms and conditions apply).

On Saturday, February 4, we will give the first 15 customers a free folding walking stick with no minimum spend.

We look forward to seeing you at one of the most accessible showrooms in Wales, soon.

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GEM ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

In Business Update

Continental photographers Format 35 extend their client base

CONTINENTAL wedding photographers, Format 35, have now extended their client base into the Vale and surrounding areas.

Young award-winning photographer, Miro Cik, offers a professional service for weddings, potraits and commercial work.

Please contact Miro to discuss your requirements in the comfort of your own home.

To ensure that your occasion is memorable for all the right reasons, call Miro on 07432 594 820.

Please visit the website www.format35.co.uk to sample the quality of his work and for an indication of his price structure.

Firefighters' Atlantic rowing marathon takes total of 46 days

TWO south Wales firefighters, who aim to raise tens of thousands of pounds for a host of charities, completed their Atlantic rowing marathon in 45 days, 19 hours and 21 minutes.

John Haskell and Jamie Windsor travelled 2,615 nautical miles from the Canary Isles to Barbados, and the money raised will go to Help for Heroes, Breast Cancer Care, The Firefighters Charity and WRVS.

The duo rowed the entire distance totally unsupported in a 'Woodvale Pairs' class boat that was designed specifically for the race but measures a mere 23 feet long by 6 feet wide.

Huw Jakeway, the acting chief fire officer of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service said: "This was an incredible and gruelling challenge that has raised a lot of money for some very worth while charities."

Coun Anthony Ernest added: "On behalf of the whole of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, we would like to say how proud we are of John and Jamie – and big congratulations to them both on an outstanding achievement."

Donations can still be made to the causes via the venture's website at www.atlanticdash.com.

If Pleasure Park is developed it gives hope that cinema will return to town

REPORT by TIM CHAPMAN

THE Save Our Cinema group believes that the proposed redevelopment of the Pleasure Park on Barry Island is the best hope of bringing back big screen entertainment to the town.

Today, Thursday, February 2, the Vale Council planning committee will consider a recommendation that the estimated £70m scheme, which includes flats, a care home and retail units, along with a cinema, should go ahead.

Bob Armstrong, the chairman of SOCA, said: "The Island looks like the only place in the town with potential.

"I can't see a cinema being located at the Waterfront – there's no space available."

Although there are large buildings available in the town – both the old magistrates court and the Pump House are on the open market – Mr Armstrong explained that mulitplex cinema groups favoured building from scratch and independent cinema companies favoured taking over former 'big screen' venues.

He insisted: "If any cinema operator is interested in moving into the area, the Vale Council has to engage with them so they know there's a local commitment."

Paul Sutton, a fellow SOCA member, said: "If the plans for the Island development come to fruition we hope a cinema operator will come to the Pleasure Park site.

"In the 2008 plans, it showed a six-screen site. However, when I saw the amended plans after Christmas, there had been a decrease in the size of the cinema allocation."

Mr Sutton said he believed that was because other leisure facilities such as bowling might be considered, and he hoped that a smaller complex than six screens would still find favour with a multiplex company.

It is almost four years since Barry lost big screen film entertainment at the Theatre Royal.

WHAT'S ON in brief

Friends draw up agenda

THE next meeting of Barry&Vale Friends of the Earth will be on Tuesday, February 7, in the Castle Hotel, Jewel Street, Barry.

On the agenda will be a de-briefing from those members who are to meet with Alun Cairns MP on February 3.

Members will want to know the present position on incinerators/Prosiect Gwyrdd and Government subsidies for burning waste.

Rapid development at Rhoose Point and the formation of a new group in Rhoose will also be discussed.

Barry&Vale FoE will be supporting those opposing the White Farm development, at the appeal stage and we are working with the Welsh Assembly in giving evidence to their study of waste issues and incinerators.

Members will be asked to consider a Barry&Vale FoE stall at this year's National Eisteddfod in Llandow.

KS

Social evening

BRIDGEND County Mayor, Coun Christopher Michaelides, invites the public to a "social evening with a difference" at the Heronston Hotel, Ewenny Road, Bridgend on Wednesday, February 8 from 7pm-10.30pm.

Entertainment includes harpist Angharad Roberts, local girl Lexi Richmond, and the Take Note Choir (under musical director Richard Norton).

There will also be several display and craft stands, as well as a regal travel display.

Admission £8, to include a light buffet; proceeds to local charities.

Change of date

CANOLFAN Porthceri Centre has had to change the meeting date as published here last week.

On Saturday, February 11 cabinet member and chair of the Regeneration Board Rhodri Traherne will chair the meeting in Windsor Road URC (across from the Mount Sorrel).

Tea and coffee will be available from 10am onwards and the meeting will begin at 10.30.

The purpose of the meeting is to gauge support for an arts and cultural centre, and to find a way to make it happen.

CHARITY BOUTIQUE

DOGS Trust Bridgend has opened its first charity boutique in Wales at 62 Eastgate, Cowbridge.

"It is open every day except Sundays, from 9.30am to 4.30pm; pop down and grab a bargain and help raise pounds for hounds!" a spokeswoman urges.

LOCAL PACT meetings

BARUC neighbourhood officers will be holding surgeries on Sunday, February 5 at Amherst Crescent between 2pm and 4pm and then at Marine Drive between 4.30pm and 6.30pm.

ST.ATHAN Pact, February 5, at The Gathering Place at 2pm.

LLANDOUGH PACT, Llandough War Memorial Hall, February 6 at 7:30pm.

BUTTRILLS PACT at 6.30pm on Thursday, February 9 at the Philip John Community Room, Barry Library, Tynewydd Road.

LLANDOW/EWENNY PACT, February 15 at Ewenny Village Hall at 7pm.

Councillor replies

'YOU HAVE TO BE THERE TO REMEMBER IT!'

COUN Katherine Kemp has recently claimed that she was surprised at the Labour Party pledge to review and reinstate a mobile library service.

Labour Members put a motion to a Vale Council meeting on September 28, 2010, to reinstate the mobile library service, but it was defeated by the ruling Conservative group.

She also claims that I did not object to such a proposed cut when I was on the budget working group at the time.

Actually, I and others did question the proposed cuts to the mobile library and the proposed closure of village libraries, including Wenvoe, Sully and St Athan.

We requested more detailed information on the numbers of people using them, and what effect such cuts would have on the services.

That was supposed to be reported back to the group, but it was not. Therefore, at one of the final meetings, the group recommended the deferral of those and other cuts – in order to obtain further information – as none had been supplied.

Coun Kemp did not recall it, because she was not at that meeting!

Also, when this budget working group reported back to the Corporate Resources Scrutiny no further details were supplied.

This time, the proposed savings were simply listed as a 'Review of Library Provision and Structure', without clarifying what was being proposed.

The cut to the mobile library was subsequently made by the Conservative cabinet.

There are no surprises, just facts.

Coun Neil Moore, Barry

(*Leader of the Labour group on the Vale County Borough Council*)

Vale MP's surgeries

THE Vale MP, Alun Cairns, will be holding local surgeries for advice and assistance on Friday, February 10, at the following locations: 9.30am–11am at Tesco, Stirling Road, Barry; 12.30pm–2pm at Llantwit Major Youth Centre, Station Road; 3pm-4.30pm, The Robing Room, Cowbridge Town Hall, Cowbridge.

Anyone in the Vale is welcome to attend, but it is advisable to call 01446 403814, to make an appointment.

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The GEM is proud to be an official partner of the 2012 National Eisteddfod in the Vale of Glamorgan

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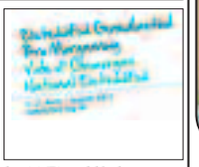

Appeal for caravans

DURING the National Eisteddfod, it is estimated that 150,000 people will visit the festival site.

Although we hope that many local people will attend, thousands will come from further afield and will be looking for accommodation in the area – in hotels, guest houses, bed and breakfast and also in private accommodation.

Every year, hundreds of caravanners will also set up home on the Eisteddfod's caravan site, which will be situated next to the Eisteddfod Festival site at Llandow on the outskirts of Cowbridge. Some will bring their own caravans, while others will be looking for caravans to rent for the week.

We have already received numerous requests for caravans from people wishing to stay on the site, but who do not have their own caravans to bring.

Do you have a touring caravan you could rent to these Eisteddfod visitors for the week?

Could you help the Eisteddfod in this way and make some money at the same time? If so, please contact the Eisteddfod Office on 02920 763 777 *sioned@eisteddfod.org.uk.*

Hire a trade stand

OVER a period of eight days, the 35-acre 'Maes' is home to more than 300 stands – shops, businesses, artists, craftspeople, charities, local and national organisations and many more that choose to use the Eisteddfod as their ultimate pop up shop.

The benefits of having a stall at the Eisteddfod last for much longer than the week itself, with numerous stallholders telling us of the commissions and orders they have received in the months and even years following their visit to an Eisteddfod.

The application forms for hiring a stand at this year's Eisteddfod are now available on the Eisteddfod web site.

For further details email Eira Bowen, eira@eisteddfod.org.uk or pick up the phone for a chat on 02920 763 777.

Eira will be more than happy to assist you with any queries you may have. This is the first time since 1968 that this great national event will visit the Vale, so don't miss out on the opportunity to be part of it!

Apêl am garafanau

YN ystod yr Eisteddfod disgwylir i 150,000 ymweld â'r Eisteddfod gyda nifer yn teithio o bob cwr o Gymru a thu hwnt ac yn chwilio am lety mewn gwestai, llety hunan arlwyo a llety preifat yn yr ardal.

Pob blwyddyn hefyd mi fydd nifer o garafannwyr yn ymgartrefu ar Faes Carafanau swyddogol yr Eisteddfod fydd yn cael ei lleoli drws nesaf i'r brif Faes yn Llandw ar gyrion y Bontfaen. Fe fydd rhai yn dod a'u carafán eu hunain ond eraill yn chwilio am garafanau i logi am yr wythnos.

Mae'r Eisteddfod wedi derbyn nifer o geisiadau gan bobl sydd yn awyddus i aros ar y Maes carafanau ond heb garafan eu hunain ac felly yn chwilio am un i logi.

Oes gyda chi garafán y byddwch yn barod i'w logi i Eisteddfodwr am yr wythnos? Fedrwch chi helpu'r Eisteddfod a gwneud ceiniog neu ddau yr un pryd? Os felly cysylltwch â Swyddfa'r Eisteddfod 02920 763 7 7 7 7 . sioned@eisteddfod.org.uk

Llogi stondin

DROS gyfnod o 8 diwrnod, mae'r maes 35 erw yn gartref i dros 300 o stondinau – yn siopau, busnesau, artistiaid, crefftwyr, elusennau a mudiadau lleol a chenedlaethol a llawer mwy sydd yn penderfynu defnyddio'r Eisteddfod fel 'pop up siop' am yr wythnos.

Mae'r budd o gael stondin yn yr Eisteddfod yn bellgyrhaeddol gyda nifer o stondinwyr yn son am yr archebion, comisiynau ac ymholiadau derbyniwyd ganddynt fisoedd ac weithiau blynyddoedd ar ôl arddangos yn yr Eisteddfod.

Mae holl fanylion y stondinau ynghyd â'r ffurflenni archebu, newydd eu cyhoeddi ar wefan yr Eisteddfod Am fanylion pellach e bostiwch Eira Bowen eira@eisteddfod.org.uk neu codwch y ffôn am sgwrs 02920 763 777 – fe fydd Eira yn hapus i ateb unrhyw ymholiadau sydd gyda chi.

Dyma'r tro cyntaf ers 1968 i'r W'yl Genedlaethol yma ymweld â'r Fro felly peidiwch â cholli'r cyfle i fod yn rhan ohono.

SIONED EDWARDS

Transition Cowbridge get 'Tidy' grant boost

(Left to right) volunteer Debbie Cooke, Michaela Richter (project leader), and Ian Harvey from Tidy Towns.

A BID by Transition Cowbridge to improve the local environment has been given a boost – thanks to a cash injection by environmental organisation Keep Wales Tidy.

Transition Cowbridge is developing an area of land in the Old Hall Grounds and transforming it into an 'edible landscape'.

The group has designed the site observing permaculture principles and will use organic horticulture methods to promote sustainable growing.

The project's aim is to inspire more people to grow food in their gardens and encourage healthy living and community engagement.

Michaela Richter, the project leader, said: "We will use the money to design an information board and signage for the planting area.

"It will also allow us to buy more plants, safety equipment and most excitingly, to organise a willow workshop so that we can plant a living willow structure."

The community growing project is attended by volunteers and once a month, Transition Cowbridge will hold a 'Growing Day', the next being on Sunday, February 5, from 10.30am.

DK

St Dwynwen gives Eisteddfod a boost

PICTURED: (left to right) Nia Roberts and Alison Huw from the Welsh St Donat s Eisteddfod fundraising committee.

SANTES Dwynwen Day – the patron saint of Welsh lovers – was celebrated in style on Wednesday, January 25, with a special event at Loch Fyne, Cowbridge, to raise money for the National Eisteddfod in the Vale later this year.

The pinnacle of the evening was an auction and tombola of more than 100 artworks by the great and the good of the Welsh art scene, together with sketches by famous Welsh celebrities.

Aneurin, Gwilym Pritchard, Claudia Williams, Wilf Roberts, Mary Lloyd Jones and Mike Jones were among the artists who had donated pictures, with Sam Warburton, Bryn Terfel, Joe Calzaghe, Nigel Owens, Gavin Henson and local rugby star Lloyd Williams featuring among the celebrities who supported the event.

Alison Huw, chair of the Welsh St Donat's Eisteddfod fundraising committee, said: "We had a tremendous evening, raising more than £3,700 in total, thanks to the generous donations we received from the crème de la crème of the Welsh art and celebrity scene.

"We are extremely grateful to our amazing comperes for the evening, our very own Caryl Parry Jones and her fellow Radio Cymru presenter Dafydd Du, to Nia Roberts for co-ordinating the donations of artworks and to Miriam, Greta and Arwel for providing the entertainment.

"The chef and staff at Loch Fyne were super and delivered an excellent meal. Huge thanks go to everyone who helped make the evening such a success."

Caru Celf wrth Ddathlu Dwynwen

CAFWYD noson Santes Dwynwen arbennig iawn yn Loch Fyne, Y Bontfaen, nos Fercher, Ionawr 25. Digwyddiad oedd hi i godi arian tuag at Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Bro Morgannwg.

Uchafbwynt y noson oedd ocsiwn a thombola o dros 100 o weithiau celf gan fawrion byd celf Cymru, gan gynnwys Aneurin, Gwilym Pritchard, Claudia Williams, Wilf Roberts, Mary Lloyd Jones a Mike Jones. Roedd Sam Warburton, Bryn Terfel, Joe Calzaghe, Nigel Owens, Gavin Henson a'r seren rygbi lleol, Lloyd Williams, ymhlith yr enwogion a rhoddodd darluniau at yr achos yn rhad ac am ddim.

Dywedodd Alison Huw, cadeirydd pwyllgor apêl Llanddunwyd a'r cylch, "Roedd yn noson anhygoel a wnaeth godi dros £3,700, diolch i roddion hael tu hwnt gan arlunwyr a sêr enwocaf Cymru.

Mawr yw'n diolch i Caryl Parry Jones a Dafydd Du fu'n llywyddu'r noson, i Nia Roberts am gydlynu'r gweithiau celf ac i Miriam, Greta ac Arwel am ein diddanu. Cawsom wledd yn Loch Fyne a hoffwn ddiolch yn fawr i'r cogydd a'r staff oll am ei gwneud hi'n achlysur arbennig i ni. Diolch i bawb wnaeth ein cefnogi unwaith yn rhagor."

Council starts countdown to the Eisteddfod

THE countdown has officially begun to the biggest week in Wales' cultural calendar, to be held this year in the Vale, which is to play host to the National Eisteddfod from August 4-11, for the first time in 44 years, at Llandow.

The Vale Council has placed a 'countdown clock' on its website, www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk, to remind residents there's still time to help raise funds for the event, expected to attract 165,000 visitors.

Vale Council leader, Coun Gordon Kemp, said: "The National Eisteddfod is an internationally-recognised cultural festival that not only celebrates all that is best in Wales, but will also attract large numbers of people to the Vale.

"This is an excellent opportunity to raise the profile of the Vale, particularly for the nearby towns of Llantwit Major and Cowbridge."

Visit http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/enjoying/eisteddfod_2012.aspx.

Bryan's American trek for hospice

A LOCAL magician from is to walk one of the world's great natural features – the Grand Canyon – to raise funds for the Marie Curie hospice at Penarth, because of the outstanding care it provided for his mother-in-law in her final weeks.

Bryan Gunton (38) says the trek is a case of "getting to Las Vegas the hard way"!

He told The GEM: "It will involve five days of trekking through parts of the Grand Canyon.

"To take part in the trek, I have to raise a minimum sponsorship of £3,100. I have chosen to pay for the cost of the trek myself – so all sponsorship will go to the Marie Curie hospice at Penarth.

The hospice holds a special place in the hearts of Bryan and his wife Helen, because of the way the staff supported the family in their hour of greatest need.

He explained: "In September last year, my very special wife completed a charity trek along the Great Wall of China after her mother died of cancer.

"Because of the wonderful Marie Curie nurses, my mother-in-law was able to spend her last weeks at home, surrounded by family and friends.

It costs £3.9 million a year to run the Marie Curie hospice at Penarth. The care and support given to patients at the hospice and their families is provided free of charge and the charity depends on the support of the public to help fund its services.

Bryan, who lives at Llantwit Major, will embark upon his trek in October, but in the meantime, he and Helen are also organising events closer to home.

"On February 17, we have organised a 'Vintage Vegas' fundraising night at the Vale Hotel, Hensol. Tickets are £45 each and include arrival drinks, a three course meal and live entertainment".

Anyone interested in purchasing tickets, should contact Bryan on 07843 529 502, or e-mail him at info@bryangunton.co.uk

Alternatively, if you are unable to attend this event, but would like to support Bryan, please go to: www.justgiving.com/bryangunton where you can make a donation.

Society's busy year in Vale

JANUARY 19, saw the first meeting of the year for the Vale of Glamorgan Ploughing and Hedging Society, at the Six Bells Inn, Penmark.

A hedge cutting event will be staged in the Vale on Sunday, February 19. *For details, contact 01446 781229.*

A ploughing match will be held on Sunday, September 16. One of the classes will carry a prize of £100.

The committee intends to organise a tractor run in late April or early May to raise funds for the Ed Evans Cancer Appeal, and to support the ploughing match. *For details contact 01656 654440.*

Ty Hafan lottery draw winners

THE following are winning numbers in the Ty Hafan Crackerjackpot lottery draw number D707.

- **£2,000:** 303850.
- **The rollover, which now stands at £3,000, was not won this week.**
- **£10:** 593031, 276019, 123741, 801695, 240510, 434272, 440594, 875516, 771411, 948634, 462469, 729881, 484772, 255419, 424404, 813582, 229122, 478701, 159876, 168485.
- **£5:** 295748, 773863, 461784, 336100, 110419, 739834, 843006, 266757, 404367, 500669, 593832, 391409, 452907, 939598, 383944, 953047, 494133, 658751, 886855, 405804, 623773, 639748, 257372, 979837, 906792, 342856, 691021, 463906, 206815, 292498, 462106, 107164, 618899, 746943, 462383, 415953, 363091, 308911, 330007, 812916, 766461, 853790, 313747, 928782, 688791, 364102, 214636, 564864, 209755, 493779, 261700, 518534, 659037, 881063, 730333, 766368, 797899, 743717, 539882, 636368.

The GEM cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions contained in the above.

For lottery information please call telephone 02920 672062.

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NEW

CWMLWM CARIAD, BARRY
Modern mid linked, show home presented, wc, cloakroom. Living room with stairs rising, kitchen/diner, two bedrooms, two designated parking spaces.
£129,950

NEW

SEAPOINT, BARRY
Far reaching sea views, lower ground floor, 2 bedroomed apartment. Through living room, communal gardens, individual storage shed, Upvc double glazing, electric heating
£120,950

NEW

EAST WALK, BARRY
Extended semi detached, spacious 23ft lounge, sitting room, kitchen, utility room, four bedrooms, garage and driveway, enclosed rear garden. Spacious living throughout.
£174,950

NEW

EDMUND PLACE, BARRY
Mid terrace traditional, three bedrooms, two reception rooms, downstairs cloakroom, option of off road parking (subject to the usual planning consent). Enclosed rear garden. In need of modernisation.
£99,950

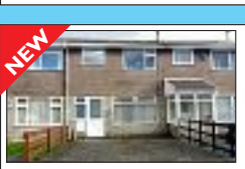
NEW

OBAN STREET, BARRY
Bay fronted traditional two double bedrooms, living/dining room. First floor bathroom. Upvc double glazing, gas central heating via combi. Forecourted area. Situated off Court Road. Ideal first time buy.
£109,950

NEW

MIMOSA HOUSE, BARRY
Well presented ground floor apartment. Westbury built in approx 2004. Two bedrooms with fitted wardrobes. Ensuite bathroom and family bathroom. Two designated parking spaces. No chain.
£124,950

NEW



WOODHAM CLOSE, BARRY
Modern mid terraced. Built approx 30 years. Through living/dining room, fitted kitchen, two double bedrooms (originally three bedrooms). Replacement Upvc double glazing, gas central heating via combi. Enclosed rear garden.
£124,950

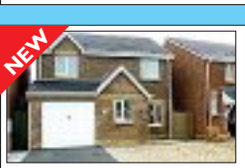
NEW

HEOL ERYR MOR, BARRY
Two bedrooms. Partial sea views from first floor. Rear modern mid terraced. Ensuite to master, wc, cloakroom. Living room, kitchen/breakfast, garage/parking.
£139,950

NEW

GLADSTONE ROAD, BARRY
Mid terraced traditional. Two reception rooms, original features throughout. Spacious kitchen/breakfast. Upvc double glazing, gas central heating via combi. Basement accessible from garden. Enclosed rear garden.
£152,950

NEW



HEOL PILIPALA, RHOOSE POINT
Modern detached. Built approx 8 years ago. Four bedrooms. Persimmon constructed. Living room/dining, conservatory, kitchen/breakfast, utility room, wc, cloakroom. Garage/driveway.
£204,950

NEW

CLOS MANCHELDOWNE, BARRY
Modern mid linked, cul de sac position. Living room, kitchen/diner, enclosed garden. Driveway providing parking. No chain.
£119,950

NEW PRICE

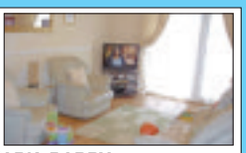
ROMILLY AVENUE, BARRY
Three double bedrooms, semi detached, two spacious reception rooms, original flooring, level, laid to lawn garden, brick built sheds, minutes walk to park and beaches.Viewing recommended.
£224,950

NEW PRICE

GREENACRES, BARRY
Two bedrooms, modern mid link, double glazing, gas central heating. Parking spaces. No chain. Vacant possession.
£104,950

WOODLANDS ROAD, BARRY
Three bedrooms, bay fronted traditional. Living/dining room. Original quarry tiled floor. Tiered garden. level areas of decking and patio. Garage/lane access. Well maintained throughout.
£139,950

BLENHEIM CLOSE, BARRY
Spacious four bedroomed. Through living room, corner positioned, front, side and rear gardens, wc, cloakroom, garage/parking. Popular location.
£229,950



WOODHAM PARK, BARRY
Modern mid link. Two bedrooms, living room with stairs rising, enclosed garden. Parking to front. No chain. Tenants want to remain.
£109,950

OXFORD STREET, BARRY
Mid terraced traditional dwelling, two reception rooms, original block flooring, three bedrooms. Rear garden, backing onto Porthcerí. Upvc double glazing, gas central heating via combi.
£169,950

HOLLYROOD CLOSE, BARRY
Extended semi-detached corner position. Three bedrooms, two reception rooms, fitted kitchen. Garage/parking, enclosed rear garden. Viewing highly recommended.
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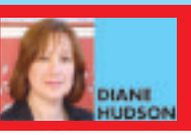
DIANE HUDSON

ADAM GOVIER

LINDA DEACON

COWBRIDGE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SPORTS REPORT

Badminton

ON January 19, eight Cowbridge pupils travelled to Cogan Leisure Centre in Penarth to compete in the annual 5 x 60 Vale badminton tournament.

The team consisted of four girls from year-7 and 8 and four boys from the same age group.

The girls battled their way to a final against a very strong Stanwell team but unfortunately Abbi Price, Claudia Howells, Izzy Gamlin and Anna Marie Pellegrotti failed to bring home the trophy on this occasion.

However, they should feel very proud of what they have achieved, beating Llantwit Major and St Richard Gwyn on their journey.

The boys team, made up of Sam Stewart, Matthew Reynolds, Finn Murphy and Josh Evans had an equally difficult group of fixtures to overcome if they were to progress to the final.

A 5-0 whitewash of a competitive Barry side didn't tell the whole story, with Cowbridge's first opponents fighting for every point.

The next round of matches against Stanwell were more straightforward, again beating their opponents 5-0 and progressing convincingly through to the semi finals where they would meet Llantwit Major.

This match against Llantwit's young guns saw Cowbridge again produce a 5-0 victory which took them to the final against a St Cyres team who had not lost a game.

The final promised more than it delivered with Cowbridge overwhelmingly beating St Cyres 5-0.

This outstanding performance takes the team through to the south east Wales tournament in February. Well done!

Player of the match: Sam Stewart.

Hockey

COWBRIDGE played their second match of hockey against St Cyres, playing two seven-a-side matches.

Selina Radcliffe volunteered to play for St Cyres and she definitely strengthened their team by scoring and setting goals up.

The two A teams played each other, first with St Cyres winning and then the two B teams played, with Cowbridge winning.

In the second half, the A teams played the B team. Both Cowbridge and St Cyres beat the B teams by a considerable margin.

All the girls who played have already developed from their first match.

Special mention must go to Seren Hawksworth, who was instrumental in defence, and Hannah Sloan who showed grit and determination to win the ball throughout – well done to all the team.

Rugby

ON January 23, the Cowbridge year-8 rugby team played their first match of the calendar year against Bro Morgannwg away.

With the match being the semi-final of the Vale Cup, there was a place in the finals beckoning, and although having lost to Bro Morgannwg in the league fixture, getting a victory was going to be an uphill battle.

The school s year-8 rugby team.

The game started extremely well for Cowbridge, and it was clearly evident that with a full strength team, the year-8 side were going to be a totally different prospect from the one that Bro Morgannwg met before Christmas.

Within 10 minutes, Cowbridge were leading 7-0. Bro Morgannwg just couldn't clear their lines, and with possession, Cowbridge quickly moved the ball along the line, where Harrison Stevens sneaked in the corner to score a try.

The game was restarted for no longer than five minutes when Harrison Stevens scored again.

The score was 12-0, and Cowbridge were looking like they were going to run away with the match.

Bro Morgannwg had not started the game yet, and with a runaway try and a quick tapped penalty, they were level at the close of the half.

The way that Cowbridge started the first half meant there were definitely more tries to come, and with the heart and determination they were playing with they were not going to lose this match.

The second half started, and for this moment on Bro Morgannwg only stepped foot in the Cowbridge half twice.

The boys were like a team possessed – when they had the ball they ran hard and true; when they didn't, they did not let anyone move more than an inch and they hit every ruck with a willingness to never lose the ball again.

The first points were scored by quick thinking from Owain Leyshon, who tapped the ball quickly and left the Bro Morgannwg defence for dead.

Owain doubled his tally with a blistering run from the base of the scrum. James Holden then made the score 33-12, by pressuring the attack into a mistake, picking the ball up and crashing over for a well deserved try.

The game finished 33-12. The back row of Duncan Ace, Owain and James were everywhere on the pitch, Cai Evans kicked sensibly and always put the team in the right positions, and Joe Nott and Dan Bunny kept the fast and strong Bro Morgannwg centres at bay.

Player of the match: James Holden, Owain Leyshon and Duncan Ace.

Archery

ON January 15, Calum Young competed in the Welsh and Open Indoor Championships for Archery.

The championships were hotly contested, especially with the event having a record attendance with teams from England and Scotland travelling to participate.

After a tiring four hours of shooting, the scores were in.

Performing any sport for four hours is hard enough, but with archery being a sport which is won and lost on such fine margins, concentration and determination were going to be key.

The result was then announced, and in his first ever championship shoot, Calum was awarded with second place in the under-12s competition, earning himself a silver medal.

Well done Calum! It is great that you are doing extremely well in archery.

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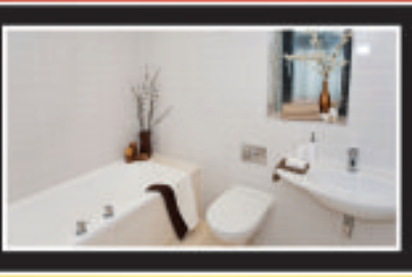
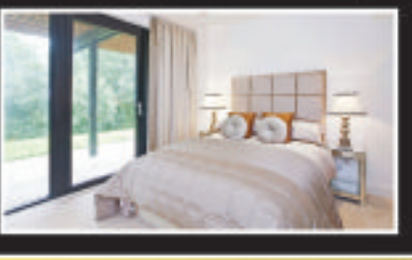
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- Double glazing
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Public Notices

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NOTICE
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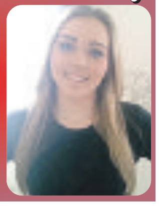
Brewery Field, Tondu Road, Bridgend, CF31 4JE
Nomination forms and further details available from **01656 724895**, or download from **www.blscu.co.uk**
Martin Hughes, Secretary, on behalf of Board of Directors
Charity No. 612C

GEM Family Notices

Birthday Wishes

Happy 50th Birthday
Ray Thomas
on 4th February
Hope you have a wonderful day.
Love you loads - Julia, Lowri, Chlöe, James, Gareth, Mum and Dad and Val
x x x

Happy 18th Birthday
BECKI
on February 8.
Lots of love, Nainy & Ganky. XXX



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Ellie Mawby
Happy 18th Birthday
3rd February
Congratulations and best wishes, love from Richard, Pam, Chris, Martyn, Vicki and Grandma. XXX

Family Notices

CREAMER
Michael Paul

Passed away 27th January 2012, at St Joseph's Convent Nursing Home, after a long illness, aged 75 years.

Dearly loved and sadly missed by wife Joan, children Sandy, Marc and Donna, grandchildren and all his family and friends.
Requiem Mass on Friday 3rd February at 2 p.m. at St Patrick's Church, Stafford, followed by cremation at Stafford Crematorium.
Family flowers only, donations to the Alzheimer's Society.
Enquiries to W Emery & Sons Tel. 01785 251205

Kathleen Nixon

John and family wish to thank relatives and friends for their kindness and sympathy shown during their recent sad loss of Kathy, also for the many cards and messages that they have received and for the donations to the British Lung Foundation.
Special thanks to Lyndsay Ellis and staff of Park Independent Funeral Directors and the staff at Llandough Hospital for their consideration and help.

WILLIAMS
Betty (Née Apjohn)

Suddenly on 23 January 2012, at the Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend. Dearly loved wife of the Reverend Norman Williams, sister to the late Mary Evans, much loved mother of Jeanne and David, loving mother-in-law of David and Sian, special Nana of Ella, Mari, Iwan and Thomas.
Service at the Church of St John the Baptist, Llanblethian, Cowbridge on Friday, February 3 at 12.45pm followed by private cremation. Family flowers only.

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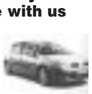

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What's on and where in your area

Eisteddfod fundraiser

A 'MURDER' is committed at the Eisteddfod and the public are being asked to help to solve the crime at Illtud's 216 restaurant, Llantwit Major on February 9 at 6.30pm.

Pupils from Llantwit Major School, guided by drama teacher Natalie Richards, will render assistance.

Three-course meal and entertainment, £25 per person; contact Illtud's 216 on 01446 796489.

More information and menu on www.illtuds216.co.uk.

Places limited, please book early!

Abstract art demo

COWBRIDGE Art Society will meet on Thursday, February 9 at 7pm at the Old Hall, Cowbridge when Cardiff artist Graham Phillips will give a demonstration and an introduction to abstract art

Non members are welcome to attend.

For more details of the society go to www cowbridgeartsociety.com.

Nearly new sale

THE National Childbirth Trust will hold a nearly new sale at Cowbridge Leisure Centre, The Broadshoard, Cowbridge, on March 3 from 11am-12.30pm (*Doors open 10.45am for NCT members with membership card*).

Entrance/suggested donation £1/family; baby/childrens' clothes, toys, equipment (prams) and maternity wear.

Sellers contact Julie on 01656 662564 to pre-register by February 29 (and for details of what can/can't be sold) or email *nctnearlynewsales@live.co.uk.*

Donations, cakes and raffle prizes gratefully received. Volunteers required on sale day and to help organise the sales.

Proceeds in aid of The National Childbirth Trust Vale and Valleys branch (formerly Bridgend, Cowbridge and Llantwit Major branch) to train three breastfeeding counsellors and two antenatal teachers.

Visit http://www.nct.org.uk/in-your-area/southwales or find us on Facebook; search 'NCT Vale & Valleys'.

Author inspires young writers

ABOVE: Dan signed books, footballs and cards and chatted to pupils and staff after his presentation.

***'STRIVE to achieve your dreams'; 'Never give up' – and 'Believe in yourself'*. These were the three clear messages for the Barry Comprehensive School's year-7 pupils – during an exciting presentation by football writer and young people's author, Dan Freedman.**

Pupils listened attentively as Dan took us on his journey from schoolboy football fanatic to accomplished author.

He shared with us video footage of his World Cup interviews with Steven Gerrard, Theo Walcott, Wayne Rooney and David Beckham.

A glimpse of the football superstar Rio Ferdinand as a 'real' person chatting to Dan over a game of pool was fascinating.

He's just as competitive off the pitch as on the pitch and it is that drive to win that has ensured his success.

Dan not only writes eloquently about the beautiful game, but about the 'ups' and 'downs' of everyday life for teenager Jamie Johnson, a boy with a dream.

Dan can captivate the imagination of his readers and this was certainly the case during his presentation.

Pupils were given tips on how to describe accurately the atmosphere at a football match or the path of a winning goal.

Back in the classroom, I am sure that our budding year-7 writers will remember his inspiring words. **AC**

Cowbridge under-11s pass their double test

ON Sunday Cowbridge under-11s hosted two teams at home, Llantwit Fadre and a touring team from Surrey, Old Caterhamians RFC.

On Sunday morning, even though the cold did not lift and the pitch became a bit heavy under foot, all three teams did their best to play running rugby.

The first game saw Cowbridge take on the touring team, Old Caterhamians. The Surrey team were not used to playing on such a wide pitch and this showed early on, when the Cowbridge backs made a few long passes to get outside the Old Cats narrow defence.

It was only a matter of time before the first try came, as Old Cats lost possession deep inside their own 22.

Ben Jones tackled the Old Cats scrum half and turned the ball over, for Ioan Williams to quickly feed Reuben Williams who was standing at number 10 for a simple run in.

Cowbridge extended the scoring with simple but effective hands across the backs - it was Ed Lewis who had the easiest of tasks to run in try number two.

From a ruck 10 metres out, Evan Thomas passed to Barny Langton-Cryer who, with Luke Martin, executed a well-rehearsed move to put Ed Lewis in for his second try of the game.

Ed Lewis, with his confidence growing each week, looked up and made a great break, feeding Barny Langton-Cryer with a long pass just before he got tackled.

In space Langton-Cryer outpaced the Old Cats defence for a great run in from the half way line. The half time score was Cowbridge 20 – Old Cats 0.

Early on in the second half, Old Cats crossed the line for their first try of the game. The try came from excellent side stepping by the Old Cats fly half, though the Cowbridge tackling was not at its best.

Old Cats seemed to gain in confidence from their opening score and after a series of penalties the tiring Cowbridge defence finally succumbed, to make it Cowbridge 20 – Old Cats 10.

After the fourth phase of play Cowbridge's Harry Edwards who found himself on the overlap and crossed the line in the corner for a great all round team try.

The final try of the game from a great individual effort by Evan Thomas. The Cowbridge number 10 found himself in the middle of the Old Cats pack, but the Old Cats tackling began to drop off and Evan found himself in plenty of space and made a run for the line from the half way line.

Final score – Cowbridge 30 – Old Caterhamians 10

The second game of the day was Cowbridge against local team Llantwit Fadre.

Ben Jones made a charge for the line with a customary hard run only to be held up over the line. Within minutes Jones had made the same charge to the line, this time to make it Cowbridge 5 – Llantwit Fadre 0.

Llantwit responded immediately with a great individual try from a side stepping centre, who ran virtually the length of the field untouched.

It was only in the last minute of the half that Cowbridge managed to cross the line again. This time the forwards made good ground down the right wing. Ioan Williams made a dart for the line only to get brought down inches short. Quick recycled ball, found Reuben Williams in plenty of space for a canter to the undefended line. The half time score was Cowbridge 10 – Llantwit Fadre 5.

The second half followed the same pattern as the first, with both defences on top and the conditions resulting in lots of scrums. With the game evenly balanced it was Cowbridge who made the decisive score.

At a lineout just inside the Llantwit Fadre half, a well worked forwards move saw Norton broke through some weak tackles and charged to the line taking a few defenders with him.

With the game in its final moments, Llantwit were trying to run the ball out of their own 22. Given the conditions the ball got knocked on and the Cowbridge back row duo of Ben Jones and Iestyn Fenn dived on the loose ball. It was a close call, but Fenn was the first to the ball and claimed the final try of the game.

Final score Cowbridge 20 – Llantwit Fadre 5.

After the game, Cowbridge hosted Old Caterhamians and Llantwit Fadre in the clubhouse. The captains for Cowbridge and Old Caterhamians made excellent speeches and exchanged mementos of the day. A thoroughly enjoyable weekend all round and we look forward to the return trip to Surrey next year.

GJ

Under-9s in triple action!

AFTER a series of rather shaky post-Christmas outings, Cowbridge under-9s arranged two games against Llantwit Fardre and then local rivals Dinas Powis.

Game 1 –Cowbridge v Llantwit Fardre

In the first half of the first game against Llantwit Fardre, Cowbridge's tackling abilities seemed to desert them permitting the visitors to score five tries.

Special mention to Dewi whose recent improvement continued and kept the boys in touch with two tries of his own.

The second half was a much better effort with ball control vastly improved as was the tackling with Cowbridge only conceding two further tries.

James and Joe were both to the fore but across the board the team played with much more determination.

Game 2 – Cowbridge v Llantwit Fardre

The second game produced one of the best encounters seen this season with both teams doing their level best to move the ball and with skill levels generally high on both sides.

Aled was in the vanguard of most attacks though sadly a lengthy period of possession resulted in the ball being turned over and Llantwit Fardre scoring the initial try.

Cowbridge recovered again with a great deal of possession and ultimately scored through Harri H resulting in a half-time score of 1-1.

In the second half, the first notable moment was a try saving tackle by Jake which can only be described as staggering!

Sadly, despite Cowbridge's best efforts, the dominant aspect of the games was Llantwit Fardre's tremendous defence and they scored three further tries.

Game 3 – Cowbridge v Dinas Powis

The first half seemed to go with possession and Cowbridge's far more adventurous style led them to lose the ball more regularly than Dinas Powis' conservative style.

The half time score of 5-7 in Dinas Powis' favour was a credit to the boys with tries being scored by Jay (2), Joe (2) and Robbie. This reflected a much better effort from the team as a whole.

In the second half, again Cowbridge had difficulties handling Dinas Powis' bludgeoning style. At one point, the score in this half was 2-4 to the visitors with Oliver and Rhys scoring tries, but subsequently Cowbridge did get their passing game going.

Some of the movement of the ball was excellent, Ioan's unselfish pass to Harri H being the pick of the day.

Other tries were scored by Jake and Rhys but Dinas Powis just managed to edge it with their youngsters putting a very limited game plan into practice extremely well.

Squad: Iwan-Thomas Bartle, Sam Coates, Ioan Davies, Jay Downes, Gruff Ford, James Gilvear, Matthew Gilvear, Elis Greenwood, David Harris, Robbie Hawkins, Harri Howkins, Ellis Howell, Oliver Jarmain, Aled Leitch, Joe Marshman, McKinley Parsons, Tom Pugh, Jack Reilly, Harry Whittaker, Dewi Williams, Jake Williams and Rhys Williams.

JS

ON AND OFF THE TRACK *with* ***Brian Lee***

Trainer could field three in classic

ABERTHIN trainer Tim Vaughan is considering fielding three runners in the William Hill Welsh Champion Hurdle at Ffos Las on February 4, in an attempt to beat last year's winner *Oscar Whisky* – owned by the racecourse's owner Dai Walters and trained by Nicky Henderson at Lambourn.

ABOVE: Oscar Whisky — a good chance to be placed.

Vaughan said: "Ffos Las offers great prize-money and it's a fantastic track, and I'll be supporting the races."

Enjoying his best ever season having saddled 80 winners to date, he added: "*Rigidity* was second in the Ladbroke Hurdle and he has a fair old engine on him. He will be entered and is likely to run.

"*Ski Sunday* is a better hurdler than a chaser and, on his rating of 142, we'll go back to hurdles and he'll take his chance at Ffos Las.

"I'll also enter *Scorched Son*. He'll need to improve, but he was second at Ffos Las just before Christmas. We always support Ffos Las when we can as they do such a brilliant job."

Ffos Las supremo Dai Walters, who is hoping to win the race again this year before taking on the unbeaten hurdle Cheltenham Festival in March, welcomes the fact that Tim is considering running three in the race. Speaking last week at Nicky Henderson's yard, he said: "The more the merrier, as we want to stage a competitive race."

Walters warned that *Oscar Whisky* is entered in two races at Cheltenham and said: "A lot of people are saying if any horse can beat *Big Buck's* then it's going to be mine. I'm not going to be bullish, but *Oscar* will be one of the best he has come across and is a lot stronger than last year."

Trainer Nicky Henderson told the number of racing scribes gathered, of which I was one: "*Oscar Whisky* would be capable of being placed in the Champion Hurdle again, but you can see what he can do when you give him another half-a-mile. I'm very much in the three-mile camp (the distance of the World Hurdle) as he has done two miles, five furlongs standing on his head.

"He's only got to get another three. Obviously we've got *Big Buck's* to beat, but if his stamina lasts, he must have a good chance as any to get close to him."

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Could it be an unmarked police vehicle? You never know these days. No more 4x4s sitting on your tail that's for sure, as the drivers notice a chunky exhaust pipe on either side at the rear.

But, of course, the driver has to resist the temptation to sit on the tail of the car in front.

The only other concern is that this highly desirable motor could be a target for thieves. However, there are so few Evos about that it surely wouldn't be too hard to find again.

To put this sub-£40,000 brute in perspective, it will hit 60mph from standstill in just five seconds, placing it in AMG Mercedes, BMW M-series and even the £240,000 Bentley Continental GTC turbo territory.

As with the above, it's when the two-litre turbo, 290bhp Evo is stuck behind a tractor, a lorry and a dithering old age pensioner that it really comes into its own.

The acceleration is so awesome that it will propel you in complete safety.

"It's like a scalded cat," commented a work colleague. He's not wrong. Push the accelerator down and aside from the massive adrenaline rush, the landscape suddenly becomes a blur, too.

The force generated is comparable to taking off in an aircraft, pushing the driver (and occupants) right back in their seats.

That's without engaging sports mode! The all-wheel drive Evo ensures that the magnificent power range is equally distributed between each wheel, while Brembo brakes competently stop it when required. There are tarmac, gravel and snow functions, too.

No surprise that this is one of the most successful rally cars alongside the Subaru Impreza. A smooth six-speed auto allows the driver to concentrate on the road but for added driving pleasure there are very easy to use paddleshifts.

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Surprisingly, you don't need to drive this vehicle fast to thoroughly enjoy it, though. Cruise around town and the tone of the exhaust and its eye-catching design is enough to stop any passer-by in their tracks. Its rakish, purposeful and imposing looks mean that the Evo has immense road presence as it rumbles along and generates many lustful looks from other motorists, too.

It tackles the motorway with ease and longer journeys improve fuel economy. Surprisingly, there's no cruise control, but it doesn't matter – you have to be light with your right foot because if you're not you'll lose your licence.

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WALES QUIETLY CONFIDENT, BUT WARY OF IRISH BACKLASH IN SIX NATIONS OPENER

Don John previews a wide-open campaign that is impossible to predict

PREDICTING the winner of a Six Nations tournament is a notoriously difficult (*and, some would say, pointless*) exercise which, for this writer at least, is best left to others in the media who feel more qualified – for it is fraught with so many imponderables.

Individual form, fitness, and availability are just three of the purely physical elements to be taken into account – never mind the far more obscure mental and emotional factors that can have a crucial bearing on a team's performance on any given match day – and about which those outside the camp can know nothing.

Only one thing is certain, as the Six Nations kicks off this weekend – all of these concerns will be weighing heavily on the minds of those who ARE in the know – the head coaches. After all, that is why they earn the big bucks!

Those casting around for clues to the eventual outcome can, of course, point to last year's tournament and on this basis, gifted but unpredictable France (who, against the odds, also made the final of the Rugby World Cup in New Zealand) are again the bookies' favourites.

In fact, though, it is not quite as simple as that.

Judged purely on recent Six Nations results, Wales could again expect to finish fourth in the table – but that would mean ignoring the profound transformation that has taken place since then in the Welsh psyche – as evidenced in that physically awesome performance against Ireland in the RWC quarter final – and also the heroic 14-man display that almost brought victory over France in the dramatic semi-final.

After so many long years in the rugby wilderness, buoyant fans are justified in their growing optimism; though with such a relatively small playing base to draw on, the Welsh camp will be keen to dampen expectations – particularly in the light of a mounting injury toll (possibly affecting up to a third of the World Cup team).

Head coach Warren Gatland has sounded an optimistic yet cautionary note, pointing out that in the last four years, the tournament had been won by four different nations:

"*We had a good Rugby World Cup. It was great – but this Six Nations is wide open and we don't want to let ourselves down.***" he said.**

Harking back to the stunning 22-10 victory over Ireland in Wellington, the quietly-spoken Kiwi added: "*We had done our homework for that RWC match, but I'm expecting a backlash***" (in their opening Six Nations clash in Dublin on Sunday).**

He is right to be wary, for there is no doubt that the Irish, boosted by the impressive showing of their top three regions in Europe, will be determined to avenge that crushing blow to their pride.

Paul O'Connell, acting skipper in the absence of the injured Brian O'Driscoll, made Irish intentions crystal clear in the countdown to renewed hostilities between these two arch Celtic rivals: "*There is no doubt that there's an edge to it… It's a tough rivalry… Some of the games have been brilliant, high intensity, physical encounters.*

"We lost to the Welsh in the quarter final of the World Cup because we didn't play to our potential, and paid the price. We can't afford to make a slow start against Wales on Sunday."

***If that* match is key to both teams' title hopes, so too is the other needle encounter on Saturday in Edinburgh, when the Scottish dark horses take on the 'auld enemy' England, now resurrected under 'caretaker' coach Stuart Lancaster – after the unfortunate Martin Johnson's demise in the wake of World Cup failure and players' off-field misdeeds.**

Another prominent managerial casualty at 'HQ', Andy Robinson, now masterminding Scotland, has turned up the heat on his old team by stating that the Scots had let a priceless victory slip through their fingers against England in their RWC group match. Some of the English players, he said, had "disrespected" Scotland: "*Their disrespected took many forms and it builds up. In the end, it undermined Martin Johnson as manager,***" Robinson added with feeling.**

Saturday also sees favourites France open their campaign under new coach Philippe Saint-Andre against long-odds Italy (who also have a new coach, Frenchman Jacques Brunel) but cannot afford to take them lightly, after being stunned by the Azzurri in the last Six Nations.

It all goes to reinforce Gatland's belief that "*the 2012 Six Nations is wide open****".***

So, let battle commence and may the best team win – hopefully, Wales, of course!

(SEE PAGE 12)

CONSOLIDATION IS NOW THE KEY ....

Mixed results for the town's squash teams

FOLLOWING the Christmas recess all three Cowbridge squash rackets teams have produced mixed results in their respective league fixtures.

The A team Bar 44 travelled to Rhiwbina C having lost twice to the north Cardiff club team in the previous campaign - this time Nick Guard and his team returned with the spoils winning 3-2 (15 pts to 11 with bonuses).

Wins were recorded at positions 1, 2 and 5 for Guard, Jon Bisson and Niall Sloan respectively while Garfield Leask was edged out 2-3 at no 3 while Simon Payne struggled to find some form against an up and coming Rhiwbina youngster (Joe Cornwall).

This result was followed up by a 1-4 reverse at home to a strong Cardiff C outfit, only Jon Bisson at No 2 managing a win.

Nick Guard (no.1) and Garfield Leask (no. 3) went down in five-setters while there were no returns for Simon Payne and Niall Sloan at 4 and 5 (match result 8-18 incl. bonuses).

Another home defeat was suffered at the hands of a team from the Cardiff club in week 3 - this time a 2-3 reverse (7 points to 14) to Cardiff Veterans.

Wins were posted at Nos 5 and 3 from Niall Sloan (3-0) and Garfield Leask (3-1) - the latter recovering from a 5-11 first game to come through 11-5, 11-2, 11-9.

Cowbridge B Bar44 went to St Mellons C in search of points, with only Tony Steele, guesting from the 'C' team, scoring the only point in a 1-20 drubbing!

The B's hosted to Rhiwbina E in their second fixture and helped redress the balance of league points with a 4-1 (19-7 points win) - Chris Ranger (3-0); Richie Ford (3-2 after 1-2) Julian Jenkins (3-1 after 0-1) and Russ Watts (3-1) bouncing back from the previous week's pastings!

Colin Baxter returned a 2-3 at No 4 putting in a fighting display before lack of match fitness got the better of him.

The B's were unable to put a team on court for their week 3 fixture but have re-arranged their home match with Fairwater B to later in the season.

C team Trio's opened their account at home to Cardiff University B - posting a confidence boosting 4-1 result on their return to Division 3 - Colin Giles finding things tough at no 1 - going down 1-3 (match result 17-7).

C's skipper Dave Matthews recorded his side's only win at Rhiwbina F in the following week's fixture however - a 1-4 reverse (5 pts to 19 with bonuses).

Unfortunately, this promising start in South Glam Div 3 was followed up by two defeats away at Rhiwbina F (1-4 - 5 points to 19 including bonuses) and at Llanishen C (2-3 - 8 points to 14).

Wins were posted at position 2 by skipper Dave Matthews at Rhiwbina and by Colin Giles (no 2) and Tony Steele (no 4) at Llanishen C. This fixture saw a shuffle in the C Trio's team with Dave Matthews and Colin Giles swapping places at Nos 1 and 2 - good thing for Colin (winning 3-0) but a disappointing evening for Matthews (0-3)

All teams will be looking to consolidate their positions following one relegation and two promotions (A to C respectively) in the remaining campaign.

In week 4 the Bar 44 A's and B's travel to St Mellons B and Fairwater A respectively while Trio's C entertain the W.I.S. team from the Sophia Gardens National Sports Centre.

Club details may be obtained from russ.watts@btopenworld.com (07779 157407).

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PLENTY OF FUN AT COWBRIDGE RFC

DESPITE no game since the emphatic victory over Banwen on January 21, training has continued in earnest and with just seven games to go before the end of the season there is still plenty to play for.

The next game is at home against fourth placed Ogmore Vale, just three points behind us, on Saturday February 11.

A close 3 - 8 victory for Cowbridge at Ogmore Vale will guarantee a hard fought match and on that day we welcome the famous Boroughmuir rugby club from Edinburgh to Cowbridge.

A coachload of 46 will be travelling to Wales on the Friday and staying at the Bear Hotel.

Having enjoyed themselves at the club two years ago they are keen to visit again and will be joining us for the Ogmore Vale game followed by an evening in the club with entertainment provided by Sophie, who will be singing and leading the karaoke; more details next week.

This Saturday the feast of rugby starts with the youth playing Rhiwbina at home, kick off 11am.

RV/RK

Under-13s outplay Dinas Powys rivals

Despite the heavy conditions on their visit to Dinas Powys, Cowbridge under-13s outplayed their opponents in a one-sided contest, winning 63-0.

The visitors dominated all aspects of play and were rarely troubled by the few incursions into their half.

Tries were scored by Cai Evans (3), Harrison Stevens and Seán Davies (2 apiece) and Ben Terry, Rhys Beynon, Joe Nott plus the try of the game, when second row Josh Evans sprinted 40 yards upfield before being hauled down just feet from the line, only for Otto Guwy to gather the ball and score; four of the tries were converted by Cai Evans.

In the backs, scrum half Osian John provided quick service to his backs throughout and centre Michael Thomas was rock solid in defence.

The pack, well led by Duncan Ace, were rampant throughout the game, with Tom Edwards, Dan Bunney, Charlie Martin and James Waters controlling lineouts and rucks.

ML

CLUB PREPARES FOR NEW CRICKET SEASON

COWBRIDGE Cricket Club has begun preparations for a new season, with net practice starting at the impressive Cowbridge School sports hall on February 8.

From beginners at under-9, starting at 6.30pm to first team seniors at 8.30pm, all ages and all standards of play will be catered for.

The club is especially keen to see new faces because the desire to improve standards is as burning as ever, and qualified coaches will be available to help all individuals reach new levels of play.

To be involved, come along on the night, or contact Ian Evans, junior coordinator on 07712 077209 or Chris Ross, club secretary on 07796446378.

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